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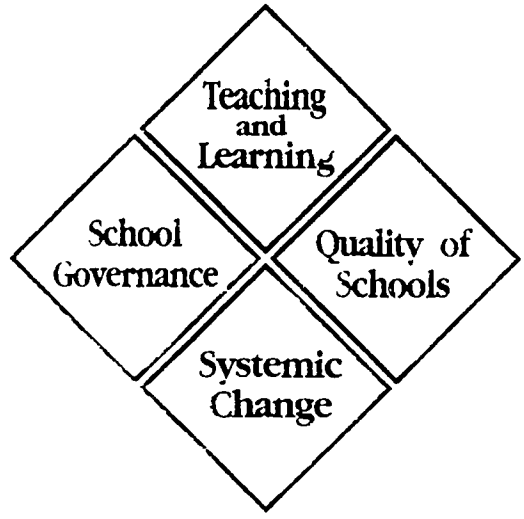
ABSTRACT

This document presents a research agenda designed to assist in the implementation of school reform in Chicago, assess its progress, and support school improvement efforts. Conducted by the Consortium on Chicago School Research, data were obtained by: (1) interviews with key public officials in business and state and local government; (2) focus groups of diverse stakeholders; (3) analysis of position statements submitted by civic and community organizations; and (4) a citywide conference of educational researchers. The agenda focuses on four topical areas--school governance, teaching and learning, the quality of schools as organizations, and systemic issues. Part 2 presents detailed findings of the four areas of concern. Cutting across all four areas is the issue of equity among and within schools. The third part outlines the next steps for implementing the research agenda. Recommendations are made to develop a set of indicators for school reform and to conduct indepth studies of the four areas of concern. Five figures are included. Appendices contain lists of interview participants, focus groups, conference papers, and conference speakers. Thirty endnotes are included. (LMI)

Achieving School Reform in Chicago:

What We Need To Know



A Research Agenda

Consortium On Chicago School Research

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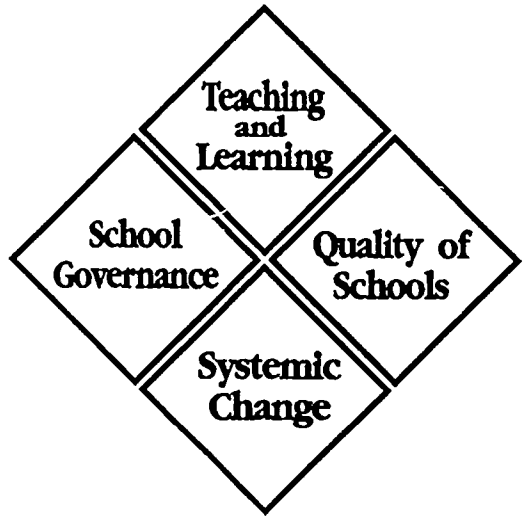

A Research Agenda

Consortium On Chicago School Research

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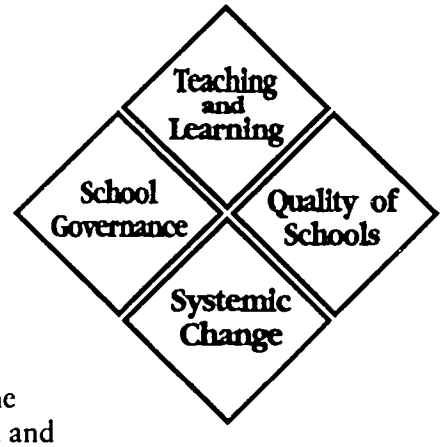
I. INTRODUCTION:

❖ HOW ARE WE DOING?

HOW DO WE KNOW?



Background

This document details a Research Agenda that can assist the implementation of school reform, assess its progress over time, and support school improvement efforts around the city. It has been developed out of an extensive consultation process involving a diverse group of individuals and organizations. In seeking out this advice, we deliberately cast a wide net. We asked Chicagoans about their current experiences with school reform and the issues which they thought might be on the horizon two or three years from now. We inquired specifically about the work in which they were personally engaged. In the course of these conversations, we focused both on the improvement of individual schools and on issues affecting the system as a whole.

Individual interviews were conducted with key public officials in the Chicago Public Schools, and in city and state government. More than one hundred individuals also participated in focus groups, including students, parents, teachers, principals, local school council members, sub-district superintendents and business leaders. Over fifty civic and community organizations were invited to submit position statements. Toward the end of this process, the Consortium convened a conference of educational researchers from around the city, bringing them together with nationally recognized experts on urban schooling to help synthesize this stakeholder commentary and add their own insights. This is very much an agenda for Chicago—built out of the concerns of Chicago school leaders and key participants, and informed by the best expertise both local and national.

What Chicagoans Talked About: A Capsule

Improving Access to Information about Basic Procedures

Many of the issues raised during the consultation process involved concerns about "how to do things" and "how to find out about such matters." The prevalence of such comments is not surprising. Chicago is crafting a new system of education, and there are lots of questions. Many of these inquiries were about standard administrative operations—procedures, policies, reports, and deadlines. Comments focused on the need to improve the

timeliness, succinctness, and accuracy of the information disseminated, and on the quality of human interactions around this advice giving—that is, on how school system staff could be courteous and helpful.

Responding to such information requests places new demands on central office staff. Where in the past, they issued directives to support implementation of centrally developed policies, now they are reorganizing to support local initiatives. The provision of such services is properly the responsibility of a Central Service Center, and is not formally a research activity. Evaluation studies, however, can assist the implementation of this organizational change and help us assess the effectiveness of the central office in addressing this support function.

Disseminating Materials on Effective Practices

Participants spoke of a need for disseminating information about effective programs and practices. For example, What are the most popular approaches to improving student discipline? Or, How do I find out more about cooperative learning, peer coaching, or outcomes-based education? Such inquiries typically assume an identified need for which some package of information and expert advice already exists. This is another central service function—supporting local school innovation—which takes on increased salience in a decentralized system. Although here, too, providing such information is not in the realm of a research agenda, organizational researchers can assist the school system's central office and other organizations in their efforts to provide such services and help monitor how well these new systems are working.

Collaborations Among Individual Schools and Researchers to Solve Local Problems

Attention to the improvement efforts of individual schools also raised ideas about how researchers and school participants might work together to support local problem solving. Unlike specific requests for information discussed above, the problems of school practice envisioned here are less well-defined. The assistance that schools seek is not "off-the-shelf information." Rather, it is better characterized with such labels as intervention research, organizational development, and action research. A researcher may work with an individual school community over some period of time to help clarify the problems it is confronting and identify possible solutions.

Such research efforts are valuable not only because they help participants address an immediate problem but also because they can enhance the capacities of these individuals to solve future problems on their own. In this regard, research can advance a major aim of school reform—the development of individual school communities as self-guided organizations. During the city-wide

research conference, many local researchers expressed interest in working with individual school communities in this capacity. The Consortium can help facilitate these connections and form a support network among researchers engaged in such work.

Credible Information on "How We Are Doing"

Others spoke about the need for credible, accurate information about the progress of improvement efforts. Concerns about student learning, the quality of school programs and their environments, and the operations of governance reform ran throughout the various interviews and focus groups. At individual schools, at central policy making positions, and, more broadly, across the city, people asked, in effect, How are we doing? What seems to be working well? Where are things not working well? And where should more attention be directed? In part, these comments focus on developing the capability of individual schools to chart their own progress; they also address a broader public concern about the conditions of education in the city and the progress of reform.

Comments such as these underscore the need for an educational indicator system that monitors critical aspects of schooling and regularly reports to the diverse audiences who might use this information. Part II of this report (*The Conceptual Framework: Content of the Agenda*) lays out a conceptual framework for such an indicator system based on ideas generated during the consultation process. Supporting the development and implementation of this indicator system is a major task that the Consortium proposes to take on as a core part of its continuing work. This is consistent with the basic mission of the Consortium, as a cooperative enterprise among area researchers, to support accurate informative analysis and public reporting. The next steps toward achieving this goal are discussed in Part III of this report (*Implementing the Research Agenda: Indicators, Special Studies, and an Organizational Framework*).

Basic Studies: the Foundation for Enduring School Change

Finally, some reminded us during the research conference of the disturbing tendency in education to reinvent failed solutions and wonder why they fail again.[1] As the noted baseball sage Yogi Berra exclaimed "It's deja vu all over again." Romantic notions about schools and their improvement have regularly confronted a harsh empirical reality. These observations point out the need for foundational studies including in-depth critical investigations to illumine the tensions, dilemmas, and constraints at work in public schools and to inform constructive efforts toward different consequences. Such studies need to address the central instructional activities of schools, the organizational arrangements in which these activities occur and the fundamental assumptions on which they operate. The results of such studies have both local and national relevance. Genuine school improvement is among our

highest national priorities. The conceptual framework detailed in Part II identifies the critical topics on which such studies are needed; a preliminary list of specific investigations is offered in Part III.

Some Fundamental Convictions

This agenda and the process of developing it are grounded in a new vision about how information and research can help us understand and improve the educational enterprise. Several key ideas undergird the Consortium's work:

Broad, sustained community involvement is required if educational improvement is to occur.

A responsive agenda must address the issues of multiple audiences. This agenda developed directly out of concerns raised by public officials who oversee the system, by individuals engaged in school reform in diverse neighborhoods across the city, and by outside professional educators. Clearly, the agenda must provide public officials with the information they need in order to guide reform effectively. Under school reform, important decision making now occurs in individual school communities. This means that the needs of principals, teachers, parents, and involved community members must also be addressed. Most broadly, this agenda is intended for the citizens of Chicago—it is about what they should know about their city's public schools. Everyone who lives or works in the city and its nearby surrounds has a stake in Chicago's schools.

Research rarely answers problems.

Good studies, however, can help us to better understand problems and catalyze new ideas. Historically, research has been seen as a specialized tool to be used by public officials to exercise control over schools. Yet the most effective research typically does not involve the direct administrative use of information to resolve a problem or support the status quo. Rather, good research helps identify new concerns, offers concepts for discussing these problems, and provides specific facts to enlighten such discussions.

This observation implies that a key function of research is community education. Research reporting ought to encourage a continued, broad-based public conversation about educational issues—conversations advanced by the best available information. The quality test for information is whether it deepens understanding and stimulates discourse about the aims and means of education.

A Research Agenda must respond to immediate needs, but it must also anticipate questions on the horizon.

The lack of timeliness of much research is a frequent lament. In fairness, good research is a slow and difficult process. By the time public officials become willing to commit resources to a study, the policy issues often are already hotly contested and immediate solutions are demanded. If we are to have more informed policy making over the long term, then we must create an infrastructure now to address not only today's questions but also those that are likely to arise tomorrow and beyond. The problems of Chicago's schools did not occur overnight, nor will they be solved overnight. The need for in-depth studies, data collection, and analysis will continue as we go through a long process of rebuilding the city's schools.

A responsive agenda must focus on student outcomes.

It must also shed light on the process and the institutional arrangements that contribute to these outcomes. We live in an age of accountability. The public demands information about the functioning of its institutions. In terms of schools, a focus on "the bottom line" means regular objective reporting on student progress. If we are to improve on the current levels of student performance, however, we must do more than simply document what students are (or are not) learning. We must also examine the factors that contribute to this learning. Such studies must encompass the critical processes and key contexts where learning occurs. We need to know, for example, about students' exposure to rigorous subject matter, the caliber of teaching, the adequacy of school facilities as work places for adults and students, and the quality of the social relations that bind adults and students together around a school's mission.

Studies of effective schools tell us that a good school is akin to a complex tapestry composed of many different strands carefully interwoven. The power of research is that it focuses attention on particular concerns. This focusing property means that research can be a lever for change. It also represents a potential problem. If research is too narrowly construed, we may miss important issues and create new educational problems as we seek to solve existing problems based on partial information. This is akin to pulling on selected strands when our intent is to smooth out the whole tapestry.

The agenda is not a single big study.

Rather it calls for multiple investigations involving diverse methodologies and expertise. The restructuring of the Chicago Public Schools is an enormously complex endeavor. Good planning, strategic policy formulation, and adequate public reporting to support this effort will make extensive information and research demands. These ambitious tasks dictate an ambitious agenda. Some issues call for survey data collection and complex

analyses. Other issues demand in-depth investigations by participant observers. Still others call for new forms of collaboration among educators, parents, and researchers. This agenda affords numerous opportunities to engage diverse members of the research community in this city. In fact, the agenda demands broad involvement if we are to inform the many issues that lie ahead in the restructuring of the city's schools.

The agenda calls to institutionalize a process begun with the development of the agenda itself.

The Consortium supports pluralistic policy efforts around the city. The broad consultation process employed in developing this agenda sought to assure fairness in shaping what information is eventually collected. As the Consortium promotes this agenda in the future, it seeks to assure open access to information and the ability of diverse groups to use that information. This reflects the ultimate aim of the Consortium—to enhance public discourse about education based on a belief that good policies ultimately derive from a competition of ideas where those ideas are supported by the best available evidence.

Purposes of This Research Agenda

Although this is called a Research Agenda, it is not just a set of studies or a compilation of statistics to be collected and reported to the Board of Education. In the broadest of terms, this agenda is about strengthening the numerous and varied social ties between research institutions and the city's schools so that broad communal learning occurs. This agenda serves three purposes:

(1) It provides substantive direction and an organizing framework for future work of the Consortium. The agenda is a living document that will continue to be refined and updated.

(2) It guides future activities and projects of member organizations, including universities, advocacy groups, the North Central Regional Education Laboratory, the Illinois State Board of Education, and the Department of Research, Evaluation, and Planning at the Chicago Public Schools.

(3) It is a document for broad community discussion. Its contents can help to clarify the next steps in school improvement and to shape public awareness of how school reform should be judged. Over time, the reporting and discussion of results based on this agenda will enhance the conversations about school reform and contribute to educational improvement in the city.

Future Role of the Consortium

The Research Agenda encompasses a broad set of activities intended for diverse audiences both in Chicago and beyond. The Consortium seeks to create a sustained collaborative context that engages the capacities of individuals in universities and other research institutions in Chicago school reform. This document draws attention to the work that should be done—the questions that merit investigation and the alternative ways of working that seem promising. The Consortium will take a direct role in some of this work, such as developing the indicator system. In other cases, however, the Consortium's primary function is to assist individuals and groups to undertake relevant studies, to promote broad dissemination of results, and to encourage discussions around the city about the meaning of these analyses.

Area universities can and must serve a variety of functions if Chicago school reform is to succeed. This report addresses one of those functions—advancing an agenda of diverse applied research activities to enhance educational problem solving in the city. To be sure, the research and academic community has something to contribute, but also much to learn.

Similarly, researchers in advocacy groups and community organizations have played a significant role in shaping this agenda. Their perspectives have brought a comprehensiveness to this plan and a real competition of ideas. As the Consortium moves forward, these groups are likely to be eager users of data. They can help publicize information and encourage broader consideration of results. These are important functions in a society that values democratic control of its educational institutions.

Finally, there is a special role for those researchers whose professional affiliations are with state and local government. (In fact, the Consortium has evolved at the invitation of DREP.) It is hard to envision the work set out in this agenda proceeding very far without the cooperation and genuine interest of state and local officials. The involvement of these individuals in the Consortium represents a strength. In return, the agenda and collaborative work enjoined around it can directly assist them in their particular role of advising key policy makers about important concerns. More generally, full scrutiny and fair reporting are fundamental to maintaining communal trust in our public institutions. The Consortium provides a vehicle for school officials to execute this responsibility.

Overview of the Four Major Topical Areas

Not surprisingly, given the scope of our consultative activity, we were literally overwhelmed with a blizzard of ideas about issues to be pursued, concerns to be addressed, and new data to be collected. Organizing these expressions into a succinct and broadly responsive framework was a difficult task. We sought fidelity to the

participants' commentary while at the same time going beyond mere tabulation and prioritization of individual comments.

We have attempted to synthesize across these disparate individual expressions, looking for deeper, more fundamental concerns that are broadly shared—to find the main ideas running through the stakeholder commentary. In this process, we have paid close attention to the different voices present in Chicago. We have listened also to national discussions about efforts to restructure schooling. This is an agenda for Chicago—but one with much broader implications.

The framework is organized around a set of key concerns within four major topical areas. Each concern identified in the major topical areas passes a critical analytic test—each represents an essential strand in the reweaving of a responsive urban school system.

❖ School Governance

The first topic focuses on the central instrument chosen to spur Chicago school reform—a change in local school governance. This area considers issues such as the implementation of Local School Councils, their decision-making activity, and the politics of school communities. In part, school reform grew out of a disillusionment with a bloated, unresponsive bureaucracy that was ineffective in dealing with persistent problems like declining student performance and teachers' strikes. It was widely argued that a fundamental structural change was needed to regenerate a sense of human efficacy and commitment. Two years into reform, the "Chicago Experiment" still stands as the boldest effort to date by a major urban school system to renew itself.

❖ Teaching and Learning

The second topic area focuses on the interactions of teachers and students around subject matter. The key concerns here map the technical core where student learning is advanced. Governance reform was intended to renew human commitment, foster social cooperation around the schoolhouse, and open up new possibilities for school improvement. This area focuses on the ultimate standpoint for judging reform—does it make a difference in teaching and student learning?

❖ Quality of Schools as Organizations

During much of the 1960s and 1970s, we poured new resources into schools and demanded new services with little understanding about how school staff were to accommodate. In the course of these experiences, we relearned an important lesson. Schools are social organizations whose primary task is people changing people.

The quality of the human interactions that occur within schools is central to their educational mission. If we are to enhance teaching and student learning, we must attend to the organizational conditions that encourage students and teachers to commit effort in their work. This topic area maps out key concerns about the quality of schools as work places for students and teachers and as responsive institutions of their local communities.

❖ Systemic Issues

This topic area focuses on the overall school system. While most attention today is on enhancing the operations of individual schools, Chicago still maintains a system of schools. Critical functions occur at the system level that can either facilitate or constrain local action. Further, institutionalizing school reform requires structural and cultural change at the system level as well as in individual school buildings. Some key questions about school reform also require an address at this level. Are educational opportunities becoming more equitably distributed across the city? What are the overall consequences of the enhanced student choice which school reform is also supposed to advance?

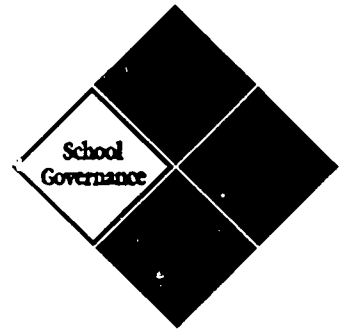
These four topic areas represent a major challenge. They call for an expansive scope of work, more extensive than has perhaps ever been undertaken on a single school system. And yet this work is as necessary as the task it seeks to support—the regeneration of the Chicago Public Schools.

II. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

CONTENT OF THE AGENDA

This section elaborates the four topical areas of the Research Agenda. It provides the conceptual base for developing indicators, in-depth studies, and action research on school reform and school improvement. Figure 1 displays the conceptual areas and the key topics under each one.

❖ School Governance



The intent of the School Reform Act of 1988 was to devolve policy making and administrative powers from the central office to the local school community, enabling the local school to mobilize its own resources to solve problems. The key instrument for advancing the purposes of the legislation is the Local School Council (LSC), which consists of six parents, two community representatives, two teachers, and the school principal. LSCs have become policy-making bodies for their respective schools. They are charged with evaluating the principal, determining whether he or she should be retained, and participating in the selection of a new principal. LSCs approve the School Improvement Plan, the annual expenditure plan, and allocation of staff. They also recommend textbooks, advise the principal on attendance and discipline policies, and advise on curriculum to support district and state objectives.

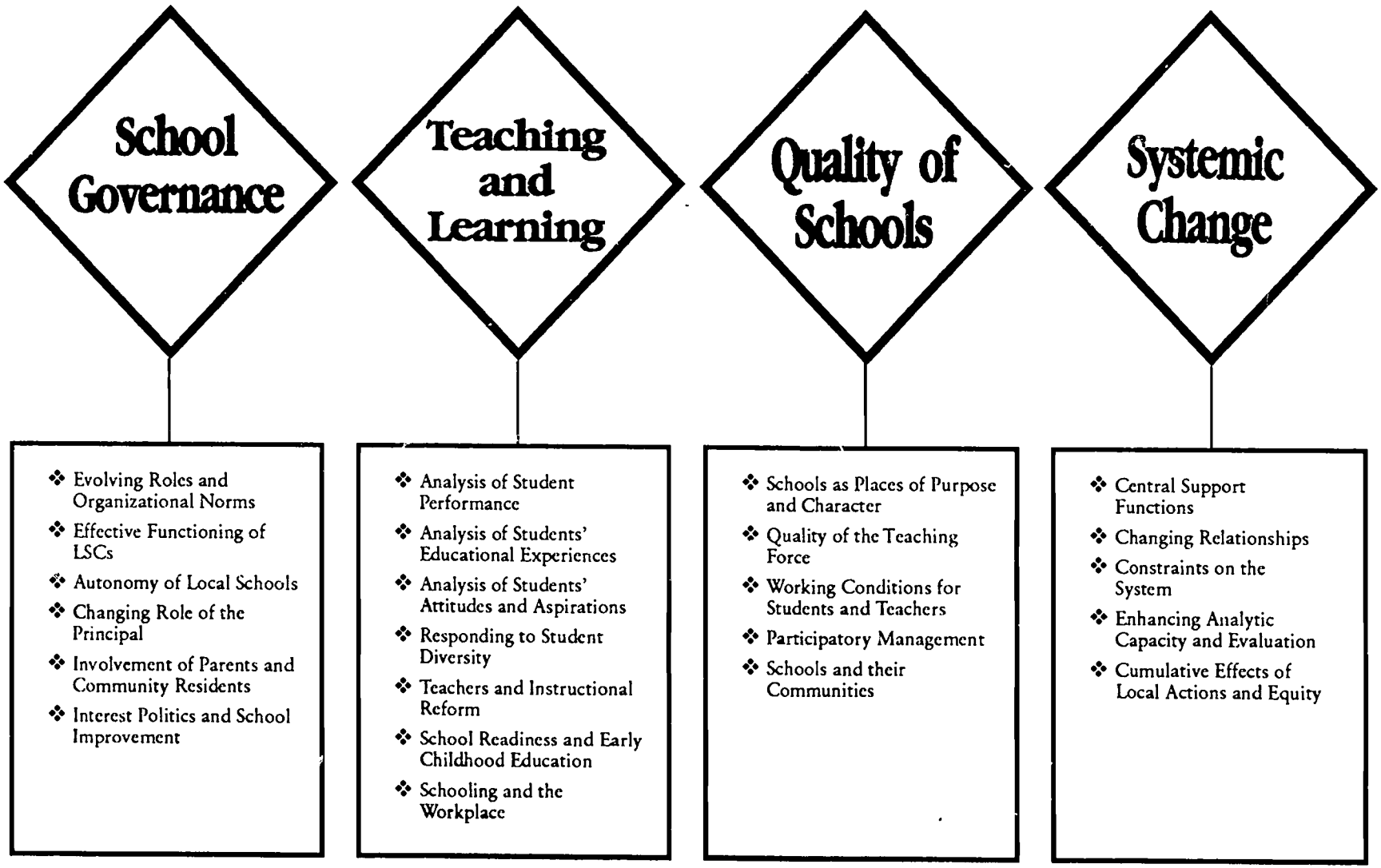
- ❖ Evolving Roles and Organizational Norms
- ❖ Effective Functioning of LSCs
- ❖ Autonomy of Local Schools
- ❖ Changing Role of the Principal
- ❖ Involvement of Parents and Community Residents
- ❖ Interest Politics and School Improvement

Evolving Roles and Organizational Norms

It is not surprising that the creation of LSCs and the move to site-based management have led to a great deal of confusion. New leadership roles have been created, including those played by the Local School Council members and members of the school's Professional Personnel Advisory Council (PPAC), who are elected by the faculty to advise the principal and the LSC on curriculum and education programs. Existing roles have been transformed, including those of principals, teachers, subdistrict superintendents, and central office staff. At the school site, questions and conflicts regarding the traditional role of the principal soon surfaced. The LSCs and PPACs were uncertain about how to involve faculty in school reform. Ambiguity characterized the relationship between the school and its subdistrict office.

The participants in interviews and focus groups found that, while real authority had been delegated to the school, much remained centralized. Where the limits are drawn and how the respective roles are ultimately defined will substantially affect the way the new governance structure works and will be important determinants of the success or failure of this reform.

Figure 1


School Governance
Evolving Roles and Organizational Norms
Effective Functioning of LSCs
Autonomy of Local Schools
Changing Role of the Principal
Involvement of Parents and Community Residents
Interest Politics and School Improvement
Teaching and Learning
Analysis of Student Performance
Analysis of Students' Educational Experiences
Analysis of Students' Attitudes and Aspirations
Responding to Student Diversity
Teachers and Instructional Reform
School Readiness and Early Childhood Education
Schooling and the Workplace
Quality of Schools
Schools as Places of Purpose and Character
Quality of the Teaching Force
Working Conditions for Students and Teachers
Participatory Management
Schools and their Communities
Systemic Change
Central Support Functions
Changing Relationships
Constraints on the System
Enhancing Analytic Capacity and Evaluation
Cumulative Effects of Local Actions and Equity

Further confusion arose as participants encountered significant external constraints under which principals and LSCs must operate. These constraints include state laws and regulations, federal program requirements, and labor contracts. Clearly, LSC members need information about their new roles and responsibilities and the regulations they must adhere to.

...the process was unclear and many council members inexperienced; in many cases the LSC relied heavily on the principal for guidance. The role of the council was then greatly shaped by the principal's response to reform. The fact that professional educators retain the primary responsibility for running the schools is not necessarily a problem. It is the confused lines of responsibility that are a difficulty, and they need to be clarified.
—Focus Group of South Side LSC Members[2]

Effective Functioning of LSCs

A primary concern about governance has centered on how the LSCs perform their job. Specific concerns include preparation of new members for their new role; the ability of members to work as a group; the ways LSCs discharge their responsibilities with respect to approval of the budget and School Improvement Plan and principal evaluation; continuity of school programs when LSC members change; and the availability of reliable information on which to base decisions. Many participants believed that reform of the structure of school governance would lead to educational reform, although exactly how was less clear.

Training. As soon as LSC members were elected, they were asked to come together as a group and immediately begin making policy with respect to their school. Even as they worked to develop skills as board members, they were thrust into the role of evaluating the principal, approving a budget, developing a School Improvement Plan, and advising on a myriad of other issues. While some received training, the training was not uniform and was not equally available to all LSC members.

Local school governance requires skills such as negotiation, conflict management, consensus building, and working together as a group. Factors frequently mentioned as important were leadership, trust, and receptiveness to shared decision making. Participants named specific skills such as running effective meetings, assuring democratic procedures, setting realistic agendas, keeping meeting notes, and understanding the differences between policy making and the day-to-day management of the school. The effort involved in gaining and cultivating these skills should not be underestimated. Yet such learning is essential if LSCs are to govern wisely.

Community involvement. Many local schools have a weak tradition of community participation, which was exercised in the past primarily through Parent Advisory Councils and the earlier Local School Improvement Councils. For years schools took their direction from the central office. Major community education initiatives are now underway to build the norms of democratic discussion and participation. Nonetheless, we expect a great deal of variation in the functioning of LSCs, related in large measure to

Chicago's LSCs are lacking the momentum to go beyond "school reform" to "educational reform." LSCs are rightly concerned about school building maintenance and student safety but seem unable to address the more serious issue of implementing educational reform policies at their schools that will directly impact on student achievement—the bottom line for Chicago's school reform.

—Position Statement, Chicago Neighborhood Organizing Project

the characteristics of the local school community as well as the immediate problems the school faces. Case studies are urgently needed to identify LSCs that are working effectively with their communities and to identify the features that make them successful.

Budget decisions. Local schools now have the authority to determine how a portion of their school budget will be spent. Spending decisions, especially for schools with high concentrations of poor and minority students where more discretionary funds exist, can have a substantial impact on teachers' work and students' learning. Consequently, information is needed to understand how LSCs and principals work together to develop spending plans and how they choose to allocate the funds.

Student achievement. Whether governance reform would actually lead to education reform was an overriding question among participants. Others noted that while there have been some early successes in the area of governance and provision of support to local school staff, in the area of instructional improvement, progress has been less clear.

The most visible link between governance and education reform is the School Improvement Plan. An investigation of how LSCs carry out their responsibilities with respect to the School Improvement Plan should indicate how well they make the transition from governance to education and how effective they are in promoting school improvement. Research in this area should focus on the processes used to develop the plan, actions that are taken to implement the plan, consistency between the budget and the School Improvement Plan, and the extent to which the plan has been accomplished.

If local site councils are evaluating principals and can make choices of who stays and who goes, you can bet that principals are going to perk up their ears and listen. But the question is, what kinds of criteria are being used? Are they focusing more on not making waves? Not antagonizing powerful LSC members? Or is the focus of the evaluation and feedback on critical issues such as working with teachers to improve instruction and curriculum?

—Kent Peterson, Associate Professor of Education, University of Wisconsin, external reviewer for the Consortium

Principal evaluation. A pivotal responsibility for the LSC is evaluation and/or selection of a principal. In a decentralized system each LSC will develop its own criteria and procedures for evaluation, creating a diverse array of circumstances across schools. The question of how criteria are selected by LSCs as a standard for evaluating a principal is a major concern among participants. It is also important to consider the form and style of the evaluation and how principals experience the process. Some participants feared that the ambiguities regarding the criteria and the process of evaluation would lead good principals to go elsewhere.

Continuity. Currently, LSC members are elected for two-year, non-staggered terms. Conceivably a school could have a new council every two years. Many participants expressed concern over the possible effect of LSC turnover on school personnel and programs. Even if the state legislature amends the act to permit

staggered terms, there will continue to be turnover. The issue is particularly salient in neighborhoods with high family mobility, where the frequent loss of parent LSC members could undermine the ability of schools to maintain continuity of policy development and implementation. It will be important to examine the impact of LSC turnover, in all of its forms, on school improvement programs.

Reliable information. In order to oversee and operate their schools effectively, the principals and LSCs need information on how their schools are doing that is concise and easy to use. In principle, the data should be relevant to measuring progress toward the goals stated in the School Improvement Plan.

To support strategic action, information must be systematic and pertinent to an overall understanding of the school. Isolated facts, anecdotes, and extraneous information about an individual school or programs at other schools may be of interest but will not help local policy makers achieve a clear understanding of what is happening in their school—the nature of the problems and possible solutions. Thus, sources of information, how LSCs and principals evaluate it, and how they integrate it into action plans are critical to the effective implementation of school reform.[3]

Autonomy of Local Schools

The primary goal of the School Reform Act of 1988 was to transfer policy-making and administrative powers to the people at the local level who are most familiar with the problems and needs of their students. At the same time, certain policy-making powers and administrative powers are retained by the Board of Education and the central administration. Among other things, the Board of Education has the power to pass tax referenda, approve the Systemwide Educational Goals and Objectives Plan, and approve union contracts. In addition, the Central Service Center retains responsibilities for allocation of funds to schools, centralized recruiting and hiring of staff, facilities management, transportation, purchasing, special education programs, bilingual programs, and research and evaluation. Decentralization has altered the balance of power between local schools and the central administration, but there will always be a tension between the two sides over the appropriate amount of influence, authority, and power each should have.

Every [urban] school...that has actually made substantial strides for improvement has had some significant autonomy from district office policies and often even from state policies....Although the reform act is designed to create autonomy for schools, it is unclear how much autonomy really exists....It would be sad to come to the end of a ten-year reform program and find out that it has failed because the basic premise of the reform was not carried out.

—Karen Seashore Louis,
Associate Professor
of Education
University of Minnesota,
external reviewer
for the Consortium

Karen Seashore Louis, a nationally recognized expert on school change who served as an outside reviewer for the Consortium, cautioned that school autonomy is an important prerequisite for achieving real educational reform. Whether school leaders perceive

that they have autonomy is also critical. School leaders may have more freedom to act than they realize. Similarly, school site professionals must also have sufficient autonomy from the LSC to make decisions regarding their work.[4]

Changing Role of the Principal

Participants voiced considerable concern about the role of the principal under school reform. The new legislation has transformed the role, making new skill demands and adding many more responsibilities. Under school reform, principals have greater autonomy with respect to their buildings; at the same time LSCs were given authority to retain or dismiss principals and to influence school policy. Change came swiftly with little time to learn new duties and sort through the shifting relationships. The work load has escalated. Participants questioned whether the demands of the new governance structure will dominate principals' time, leaving little opportunity to function as instructional leaders.

As one principal put it, "We are now both the instructional leader and the CEO." Principals have had to assume many duties that were previously handled by the central and district offices. Tasks such as the writing of the School Improvement Plan and lump sum budgeting take up a great deal of time. This takes them further and further away from students and staff. There is little time to get into classrooms.

—Principals' Focus Group

Kent Peterson, a nationally known researcher on school leadership, discussed the importance of the initiatives principals take to foster and promote school reform and improvement. School change, he points out, is likely to depend on the problems principals choose to find or solve. The highest payoff will come from identifying and working on "key problems in the school...that can have the most impact on student performance."[5] Furthermore, just as teachers need to talk and interact with one another to implement improvements, so do principals. Thus principals need opportunities for professional development and additional support as they forge ahead to lead and manage change in their schools.

Besides specific initiatives, principals, teachers, and other school leaders can effect change through day-to-day actions that begin to "shape the underlying social beliefs or cognitive maps of their school."[6] Changing underlying beliefs and ideals is a necessary step to sustaining long-term change.[7]

Finally, at a more fundamental level, it will be important to gather information on the movement of principals around the system and in and out of the district. There is widespread agreement about the critical role principals play in shaping school improvement. Understanding something about how principals transfer from one school to another, whether they leave the system, and who comes into the system is likely to be an early indication of where reform is heading.

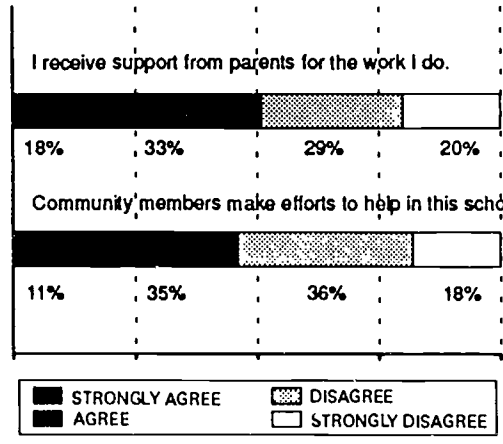
Involvement of Parents and Community Residents

Another goal of the School Reform Act was to involve more parents and community members in school activities, building a

community committed to education. However, many participants indicated that parents had actually become less involved since the reform act was implemented. Principals indicated that many of the current LSC members were active in the Parent Teachers Association before reform; consequently, there is no new involvement of parents. In addition, LSC members indicated that parents who are not on the LSC do not have as much opportunity to voice their opinions and contribute to the schools as they did when the PTA was active. On the other hand, participants reported that some schools have taken deliberate steps to involve parents. Determining the extent and kinds of parent involvement and the conditions that encourage parent activity will be of great importance.

The *Charting Reform* survey published by *Catalyst* in October, 1991, showed that about half of the elementary school teacher respondents felt they received support from parents for their work.[8] A lesser number of teachers agreed that community members make an effort to help their school. Understanding the patterns of involvement and the factors that promote responsible participation will be vital to guiding subsequent efforts in implementing reform.

Teachers' Views on Parental and Community Involvement



From *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn*

In New York conflict was ubiquitous in schools undergoing change. It was sometimes principal and teachers, teachers and teachers, teachers and parents, and sometimes principal and parents. The teams learned how to deal with conflict; and I believe it is something that needs to be taught to people. You can't change anything without conflict. What we're talking about is people's personal values coming to the fore and somehow trying to figure out what's a collective vision for a school.

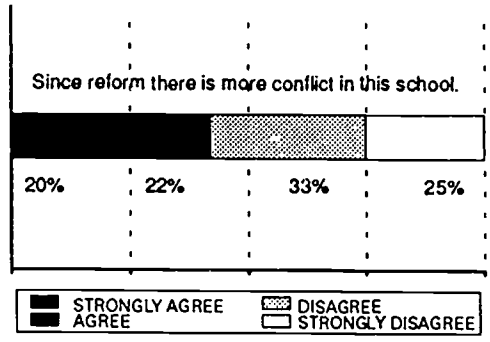
—Ann Lieberman, Teachers College, Columbia University, external reviewer for the Consortium

Interest Politics and School Improvement

A widespread concern about the functioning of the LSCs relates to the nature of the politics that emerge around the schoolhouse. Some participants feared that Chicago might mirror the New York experience under decentralization, where the politics of special interest overshadowed concerns about school improvement. Participants expressed fears of graft, corruption, and actions motivated by self interest rather than the best interests of children. Even if local school action is well intended, reform is likely to involve conflict. An understanding of how people perceive the sources of conflict and how they deal with differences will affect the character of local school politics.

The diverse needs and concerns of various minority populations within the school may introduce political issues into school governance. Throughout the system, African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Middle Eastern students, whites, and other student groups attend schools where they are minorities. The composition of LSCs and school staffs, however, may not reflect the ethnic profile of the student population. The extent to which principals and LSCs are able to establish trusting

Teachers' Views on School Conflict



From *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn*

relationships with all of the different constituencies in their school will affect its political climate.

Special problems arise involving families whose native language is not English. Language barriers can be a real obstacle in disseminating information such as notices and announcements, the proceedings of Local School Council meetings (some councils provide translators at their meetings), and information about children's progress.[9] A key question for the new governance structure is how LSCs and school communities can address the concerns and needs of diverse interests in their attendance areas while still forging consensus to make decisions and take action.

❖ Teaching and Learning

Teaching and learning are the defining activities of schools. All other structures and processes—governance, school organizations, and the central and district offices—exist to support these. Indeed, the primary purpose of school reform is to improve instruction and learning.

Accordingly, a major focus of the Research Agenda is students: the quality of their learning experiences, their attitudes and aspirations, and their performance. Teachers, too, are critical. What they think and do will greatly influence the quality of students' experience. Thus it is equally important to examine their perceptions and behaviors. What support and encouragement do they receive for improving instruction? What influence do teachers have on the course of instructional reform in their schools?

- ❖ Analysis of Student Performance
- ❖ Analysis of Students' Educational Experiences
- ❖ Analysis of Students' Attitudes and Aspirations
- ❖ Responding to Student Diversity
- ❖ Teachers and Instructional Reform
- ❖ School Readiness and Early Childhood Education
- ❖ Schooling and the Workplace

Analysis of Student Performance

To most participants, student performance was a key concern. Assessment of student progress was a dominant theme in position papers, interviews, and focus groups. Currently, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) is given in reading, mathematics, science, and writing each spring to students in grades one through eight. The Test of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) is administered to ninth through twelfth graders. In addition, the district tests third, sixth, and eighth graders in listening and speaking skills. To measure state goals and objectives, the Illinois Goals Assessment Program (IGAP) is administered to third, sixth, and eighth graders in reading, mathematics, and language arts and to eleventh graders in reading and mathematics. Subjects are being added each year, and by 1995 assessments will be given in seven broad content areas.

Standardized tests. Participants generally expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the ITBS because, like many standardized tests, it appears too narrow in its focus. The consensus was that it measures fragmented bits of knowledge well but does not measure some of the more important and less easily measured skills, such as developing a cogent argument, gaining an appreciation for fine and performing arts, and problem solving and

higher order thinking skills. Some teachers feel they must spend an inordinate amount of instructional time preparing students for the test. As a consequence of the multiple choice format, test preparation may deteriorate to drill and memorization. The assessment system, thus, reinforces more remedial aspects of instruction.

There was more support for the IGAP because it is custom designed for Illinois objectives and measures a broader range of skills and understandings. However, the inability to obtain student level information and disaggregate school data by grade and specific subgroups of students was seen as a limitation.

Over 40 percent of elementary teachers spent more than 12 hours on preparations for standardized tests. The responses lead to a total estimate of 155,464 hours spent in test preparation in the CPS elementary schools during 1990-1991. This is equivalent to a teacher devoting 22,209 seven-hour days or 120 complete school years to test preparation. The cost, figured at an average teacher salary of $35,000 is about $4,200,000.

—Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn

Objectives. To be meaningful, the assessment system must be linked to a clearly articulated set of objectives establishing what an individual should know and be able to do as we approach the twenty-first century. In Chicago, three sets of objectives exist: the statewide curriculum objectives, Chicago's uniform objectives and standards, and supplemental objectives that may be determined at the school level. These objectives would necessarily encompass:

- ❖ basic knowledge and skill in core subject areas: reading, mathematics, history and social studies, and science;
- ❖ foreign language, art, music, and drama;
- ❖ higher order thinking skills, including the ability to formulate arguments about interdisciplinary problems such as multiculturalism, world affairs, technology, and society;
- ❖ communication skills—written, oral, and auditory;
- ❖ social and work skills; and
- ❖ attitudes and dispositions for citizenship, such as tolerance, volunteerism, and public responsibility.

Research on student performance needs to take account of these objectives.

Local decisions. The assessment program should facilitate wherever possible the capability

When test results become the arbiter of future choices, a subtle shift occurs in which fallible and partial indicators of academic achievement are transformed into major goals of schooling.... At root here is a fundamental dilemma. Those personal qualities that we hold dear—resilience and courage in the face of stress, a sense of craft in our work, a commitment to justice and caring in our social relationships, a dedication to advancing the public good in our communal life—are exceedingly difficult to assess. And so, unfortunately, we are apt to measure what we can, and eventually come to value what is measured over what is left unmeasured.... In neither academic nor popular discourse about schools does one find nowadays much reference to the important human qualities noted above. The language of academic achievement tests has become the primary rhetoric of schooling.

—Committee of the National Academy of Education "Commentary on the Nation's Report Card: Improving the Assessment of Student Achievement." Washington, 1987.

Already, there is widespread discussion in Chicago, reflecting national concerns, about the appropriate ways to measure such achievement. Further study is necessary, drawing upon other work but focused on Chicago's particular circumstances.

—Department of Research, Evaluation, and Planning, Chicago Public Schools

We must begin to change our whole system-wide assessment program. From the view of most classroom teachers, standardized testing is time consuming and discloses little information which is valuable...Certainly, a good case could be made for abandoning standardized testing for the primary grades. We also ought to encourage more instructionally-focused assessment processes, however time consuming they are. The portfolio process, instruments which allow for creative thinking and expression, ought to be encouraged as alternative assessments of instructional efforts.

—The Chicago Teachers' Union

of local schools to obtain evaluative information relative to goals they set for themselves. Local decision making implies changed procedures for test selection and reporting of results. In this regard there was widespread interest in new measures of student performance that move beyond paper and pencil standardized tests. Many people spoke of the need to investigate the use of authentic measures of student performance, such as portfolios and projects. Participants feared that, unless progress is made toward a combination of clearly articulated aims and more tangible assessment, we will be left with a very minimalist accounting system.

Need for change. The testing issue is enormously complex. Even aside from a consideration of school reform, testing is mired in controversies about purpose, validity and reliability of measurement, test security, cost, and information use and abuse. Unless these issues are confronted, we will not have adequate measures of learning in a form that is broadly interpretable. There is a further fear that reliance on standardized tests may dampen interest in and enthusiasm for innovative teaching. These concerns are not new; they were highlighted in a meeting sponsored by the MacArthur Foundation in the fall of 1989.[10] Lloyd Bond spoke to them again in a citywide meeting sponsored by the Joyce Foundation in 1990.[11] Revamping testing and assessment remains a high priority for Chicago schools; the Consortium recommends that immediate and sustained attention be given to this issue.

Although testing dominated discussions of student performance, participants discussed other important measures of student outcomes. These include attendance rates, course failures, promotion from one grade to the next, drop-out rates, and graduation rates. A pertinent aspect of the graduation rate is the number of years required to obtain a high school diploma. Due to high course failure rates, large numbers of students require more than four years to obtain their diploma.

Analysis of Students' Educational Experiences

Students' educational experiences influence the degree to which they attend school regularly and put forth effort and affect how well they perform on standardized tests. Consequently, any research on school reform must attend to students' experiences and learning opportunities.

Learning opportunities. A fundamental concern is the degree to which students have access to appropriate educational services and programs.[12] Lack of prekindergarten programs means that many students who start school are not ready to learn. Inadequate

and inappropriate programs exacerbate absenteeism and dropping out, which results in minimal participation in schooling for thousands of Chicago students. Participants asserted that there is great variability in the quality of experiences students receive. Some students have access to schools with enough space, qualified staff, up-to-date texts, science equipment, and counseling services. Other students attend overcrowded and depressed schools.

The nature and scope of instruction is clearly central to understanding what students eventually learn. Students cannot expect to do well on performance tests if they have not been exposed to the subject matter. What is the stream of content they receive? How is content organized? How much time is allotted to each subject? Are the curriculum materials appropriate?

Curricular offerings. Under school-based management, considerable variation in curricular offerings is likely to exist from one school to another. Although schools have an obligation to follow state and district curriculum guidelines, they have some flexibility in how they reach these objectives, and they can supplement the common curriculum objectives with objectives of their own. Many schools have adopted innovative programs, such as Accelerated Learning, Essential Schools, and new programs, such as the Afrocentric Curriculum and Reading Recovery Tutorial. Under these circumstances, it is important to examine both the common threads of content and the variations across schools.

In addition to content, it is necessary to understand the nature of the learning activities. Do students experience learning as a deadening process of acquiring a long list of seemingly unrelated facts, rules, and procedures? Or are they stimulated to think independently? Too often teachers assume that low achieving students cannot learn higher order thinking skills. As a consequence, they concentrate almost exclusively on routine drill and practice.

Effective programs. Much research has already been done on instructional practices that are productive in urban schools. Such instructional practices include high expectations for student performance, adequate time for instruction, reasonable class size, firm and fair discipline, and support and encouragement from parents. Herbert Walberg, professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has documented thousands of studies that establish the effectiveness of specific kinds of learning experiences, such as mastery learning, accelerated learning, reading training, and cooperative learning.[13] The key question for Chicago is whether students are being exposed to instructional practices that are known to be effective.

Students' educational experiences should lead them to move beyond basic skills to develop their

The great concern among black educators and researchers is about the quality of instruction available to children in public schools. And what we would like to know is what changes are being made in the way instruction is delivered, in teaching practices, and so on, during this reform process?...what kinds of text books, what kinds of materials are being used? Are the materials challenging? Are we using books with complex words or complex problems, rather than simple materials?

—Edgar Epps,
Professor of Education,
University of Chicago.

capacities to the fullest. Such schools as the Comer Schools in New Haven, Success for All in Baltimore, and Central Park East in New York City demonstrate that inner-city schools can successfully promote excellence. Research should identify high performing students in the city and examine the constellation of home, school, and community experiences that account for their success. Effective programs need to be documented, disseminated, and replicated.

Varied contexts in which students learn. Students only spend about 20 percent of their waking hours in school. Outside of school, they learn from their parents, other family members, peers, community role models, the media, etc. Thus, a full understanding of student learning entails identifying the variety of contexts in which students learn, and how learning in one context might complement or conflict with learning in other contexts. These issues take on added complexities in a city like Chicago that is characterized by racial, ethnic, and income diversity, with a resulting diversity in the nature of students' learning experiences beyond schools' walls. Understanding the range of contexts in which students learn can help identify family and community resources that can aid school learning and help overcome areas of conflict between school learning and learning in other contexts.

A final concern is whether students' experiences are humane. Do they attend schools that are clean and safe and have adequate basic supplies, such as toilet paper and lunchroom equipment? Does the school promote a nurturing, caring environment? More will be said about this in the section of this report on the *Quality of Schools as Organizations.*

Analysis of Students' Attitudes and Aspirations

Attitudes and aspirations are also influenced by students' educational experiences. Participants repeatedly stated that students should want to go to school and should experience the joy of learning. Research has also shown that students who are actively engaged in learning are likely to perform better on achievement tests.[14] Thus, important questions for students are whether they spend their time watching the clock during classes or are actively involved in learning activities; whether they feel bored or challenged; and whether they feel they are doing the minimum or making their best effort.

It is equally useful to gather information about students' aspirations. Positive learning experiences should lead students to feel confident about their abilities and the future. Students who hold vague or defeatist expectations may have had recurrent negative school experiences. In this regard it is important to probe more deeply into student attitudes. Almost all students, whether low or high income, or white or black, agree that education is a path toward social betterment, and most would like to go to college. However, when students are asked how far they expect to

go with their own education, their predictions are quite different, with low-income blacks indicating the lowest aspirations.[15] We need to better understand how children begin to shape their aspirations and the role that educational experiences play in this process.

Responding to Student Diversity

While there is a strong thrust nationally for greater standardization of curriculum through adoption of national goals and possibly a national test, there is an equally strong thrust locally for diversification of the curriculum through multicultural education.

In Chicago the two largest student groups are African-Americans, who make up 61 percent of the student population, and Hispanic students, who account for 26 percent of the students. The latter group is the fastest growing segment of the school population. Although Hispanic students are often thought of as a single entity, in fact the term encompasses students of very different backgrounds, whose ancestors and families have migrated from Mexico, Puerto Rico, other Latin American countries, and Spain. Beyond African-American and Hispanic groups, there is a multitude of smaller racial and ethnic populations representing Eastern Europe, Russia, the independent republics formerly of the U.S.S.R., China, Japan, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, and other countries. Bilingual education is offered in twenty different languages in Chicago.

In addressing the needs of minority students, four inescapable issues must be confronted: equity, language, culture, and experience.[16] (Equity has already been discussed above in relation to equal access to programs, materials, and facilities.)

Language is a salient issue for the limited English-speaking students, whatever their national origin. A key concern is how schools afford opportunities for students to learn in their first language while making a transition to English. For English-speaking students, educators must be sensitive to the nuances of word meanings for different cultural groups. Some students may fall through the language cracks and end up with little reading and writing skill in either their first language or in English.

Students from different cultural backgrounds arrive at school with different norms and expectations regarding appropriate behavior, sex roles, attitudes toward authority, and patterns of interpersonal communication, among many other unique

As we move forward,...the study of bilingualism must encompass multiple strategies:

1) the training, certification and staff development of teachers;

2) the assessment of language needs and prescription of educational plans;

3) the bilingual curriculum, dual language development, subject matter instruction and transition to regular classrooms;

4) outreach and reinforcement for parents; and

5) value-added studies regarding the success rates of bilingual educational students and English-speaking students.

—John Attinasi, Director of the Urban Teacher Education Program Indiana University Northwest.

circumstances that may influence their reactions to schooling.

Similarly, various cultural groups and families within those groups bring specific but different experiences to the school situation. Migration, prior dealings with governments and bureaucracies, and prior experience with schools may affect how students and their families respond to school and classroom activities and calls for volunteerism and participation.

Teachers and Instructional Reform

Teachers are key to helping schools move from governance reform to instructional reform. Formally, two teacher representatives sit on each school's LSC. In addition, Professional Personnel Advisory Committees were established by the School Reform Law to advise LSCs and principals on curriculum and school programs. Many other teacher committees exist in different schools. Participants agreed that teachers must work as partners with the LSC and the principal to guide reform in their schools. Teachers must also be involved in finding ways to implement instructional reform in the classroom.

Clearly staff development will have to be an integral part of any effort to strengthen teaching. Fifty percent of Chicago elementary teachers plan to remain in teaching for eleven or more years.

—Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn

Professional development. The role of teachers in reform is intertwined with professional development. As teachers grapple with how to make improvements, they will seek learning opportunities through professional development. Effective professional development should arm them with the intellectual and professional resources they need to better participate in school-based management and invigorate their own teaching.

In discussing professional development, participants expressed an interest in research on factors that affect student achievement and on the promising new approaches to instruction discussed above. It was acknowledged that making time available for teachers to take part in staff development continues to be a problem, but one that must be confronted if reform is to succeed. There was consensus that teachers themselves should take the lead in determining the kind of professional development experiences they will receive.

...[in New York] teachers, who were taking a leadership role in the school said, "Look, we do thousands of things that never show up in your reports"....So we invented a thing called the vignette, where the teacher leaders themselves actually wrote about a teacher who they worked with...we were able to not only tell stories about what these people did, but there were some themes that just jumped out....

—Ann Lieberman, Professor, Teachers College, Columbia University, external reviewer for the Consortium

Forging Learning Communities. There was also agreement that teachers and other professional staff should not be viewed as mere receivers of information; instead they should be involved as active participants in the research process. This requires breaking down the norms of the privatization of teaching and forming learning communities of adults in schools to collaborate with teachers and other researchers in addressing school problems.

There is a substantial amount of existing research on best practices that could and should

be incorporated into professional development. Cooperative relationships among the universities and such organizations as the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), and the Chicago Public School System (CPS) can be strengthened and expanded to address the need for professional development opportunities. Ways must be found to provide teachers the time needed for learning and development and to encourage them to see such learning as central to their work.

Most people recognize that these recommendations have implications for extending teacher time. The Charting Reform results, however, indicated that two thirds of the elementary school teachers oppose extended school days and years. Clearly, some extended conversations with teachers are needed if we are to work through these issues of enhancing professional development.

—Anthony Bryk, Director of the Center for School Improvement, University of Chicago

School Readiness and Early Childhood Education

Many participants encouraged us not to limit our focus to the elementary and secondary schools. The Research Agenda must also address what happens before students enter school and after they leave school. With respect to early experiences, better information is needed regarding the background of students at school entry, including assessment of their health and nutritional status and their cognitive and social skills. English language proficiency and the ability of students to make the transition to school from a multicultural home environment can profoundly influence children's ability to succeed in the primary grades. Thus, the availability and quality of educational services prior to school entry should be surveyed.

More generally, schools are now asked to solve a wide range of problems, many of which could be better addressed prior to students' entry into school. Information on early childhood education is useful not only to the school system but also to Chicago's public and private child welfare agencies. Cooperative research and reporting could lay the groundwork for collaborative action.

Schooling and The Work Place

Similarly, the agenda must also address the transition from high school to postsecondary education and the work place. There was a general sense that we needed better information on Chicago Public Schools students' actual experiences. Special attention focused particularly on the linkages to the work place. Although this is the modal outcome for most students, relatively little attention has been given to how the connection between schools and the local economy might be strengthened. Business leaders indicated in their focus group discussion that as few as one in ten Chicago school graduates pass their basic employee exam. Not long ago that number was one in three.

Business has assumed the responsibility for training new employees, including remediation of their basic skills. However, there is a certain point beyond which it is not possible to bridge the large gaps that exist....The problem is exacerbated by the changing needs of business and industry. Today there is much greater need for people with higher level technical skills than ever before.... The poor quality of the work force is a particularly acute problem for businesses who want to remain in Chicago. They already pay higher taxes in Chicago than they would in the suburbs, and on top of that, they must shoulder even higher costs for employee training and development.

—Business Leaders Focus Group

❖ The Quality of Schools as Organizations

Research clearly demonstrates that students do not learn well in impersonal institutions which lack clear purposes; where students and teachers feel unsafe; and where people feel isolated and uninvolved. Consequently, part of the Research Agenda is aimed at determining the extent to which Chicago schools are making progress toward becoming robust organizations.

- ❖ Schools as Places of Purpose and Character
- ❖ Quality of the Teaching Force
- ❖ Working Conditions for Students and Teachers
- ❖ Participatory Management
- ❖ Schools and their Communities

Schools as Places of Purpose and Character

In our consultations, a repeated theme was that schools should be engaging, vital, and active places where students and teachers want to be. Such comments led to more philosophical discussion about good schools as places of purpose and character, where there was clarity of mission and a press toward academic work in a humane and caring environment.

Purpose. If schools are to be engaging communities for teaching and learning, a sense of common purpose must exist—purpose that can inspire genuine human effort. This means agreement about what should be taught and how it should be taught and about the expectations held for both students and teachers. It also implies that students develop their own sense of identity and personal values and that there is agreement on the norms of civility governing adult and student interactions. In short, we must attend to the beliefs and values held by both adults and students about the institution in which they work.

Expectations. In describing the qualities of good schools, participants were unanimous in their belief in the importance of high expectations. Students should be expected to work hard, do their best, and strive for excellence. Principals and teachers must genuinely believe that all students can and should learn subject matter and acquire the skills, dispositions, and attitudes of a well-educated citizen. In his presentation to the Consortium Conference, Kent Peterson stressed that the Research Agenda should attend to the underlying beliefs—or cognitive maps—that parents, teachers, principals, and LSC members possess and to how these leaders go about shaping the beliefs of others in the school community.[17]

...And that's the kind of triumvirate of vision, goals, and project that is what drives the way people actually gain commitment. I think one of the things we've learned is that you can't mandate commitment, and we can't change anything without it.

—Ann Lieberman, Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, external reviewer for the Consortium

Goals. Increasingly, research is focusing on the linkages between people's beliefs and school change. Such change occurs when people act on their goals. As they develop projects and have some success, people become more convinced of the value of their goals and beliefs.

Quality of the Teaching Force

Meaningful school improvement will require a major focus on the human resources of the Chicago Public Schools. No industry, profession, or field of human endeavor which seeks to prosper can long ignore the quality of its work force. Intelligent, competent, and committed personnel are central to the work enterprise. As parents make judgments about schooling, who among them would not place high value on the competence, intelligence, and humane character of those adults to whom they entrust their children?

This issue is especially critical in education now. In the past, elementary and secondary education in America benefitted greatly from the fact that teaching was one of the few career opportunities available to educated women. As educational and economic opportunities for women have expanded, concern has heightened about whether the teaching profession will be able to attract its necessary share of our nation's intellectual and human resources. The issue becomes even more significant as we confront the growing diversity among students and as we struggle to enliven in our schools a meaningful multiculturalism.

Recruitment. According to the Consortium's recent survey of elementary teachers, 24 percent of the elementary teachers in Chicago plan to resign within the next five years; over the next ten years nearly 50 percent plan to leave.[18] This represents the loss of 4,300 elementary teachers in the next five years. Assuming equal percentages held, 1,600 secondary teachers would resign during the same period. Clearly the Chicago Public Schools will need to recruit a significant number of new teachers to replace those leaving the system. At the same time this attrition presents an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen the teaching force through deliberate strategies aimed at attracting a cadre of qualified, competent, and committed staff.

The issue goes beyond the Chicago Public Schools. This is really a pipeline problem. It begins with the basic characteristics of individuals entering professional training at the institutions that traditionally send large groups of graduates to the Chicago schools. Next it moves on to the quality of the pre-service education they receive.[19] Then it becomes a matter of early shaping experiences in teaching and the quality of ongoing professional development discussed earlier in this report.

One of the first concerns is to determine whether the teacher pool contains individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Teachers from various racial and ethnic groups can play an important role in helping to build strong multicultural programs and in serving as role models for students of similar backgrounds. Given the diversity of the student population in Chicago, there is an urgent need for a culturally diverse teaching force.

A second concern is to determine the intellectual abilities and academic preparation of those who seek to enter the teaching profession. Who, among those enrolled at the institutions that

supply graduates to the Chicago schools, are drawn into programs of teacher preparation? What are their undergraduate experiences in terms of course work and other related academic preparation? For those entering the profession at mid-career, what is the nature of their academic backgrounds and work experiences?

A third concern focuses on the subject matter exposure and experiences of individuals in teacher preparation programs and on the level of professional knowledge and clinical expertise demonstrated in these settings. Teaching in Chicago requires some very specific kinds of professional training. Teachers should have course work and practice-teaching experience that prepares them for the inner-city schools—training, that is, which familiarizes them with an environment where there is no "average student", where there is instead, a diverse population of students, many of whom live in very poor circumstances, in neighborhoods dominated by gangs, or in close proximity to drug users and dealers. Because school-based management is broadening the participation of teachers in the life of their schools, teachers also need exposure to the emerging literature on decentralization, school improvement, and strategic planning.[20]

Quality. The central concern related to teachers is the demonstrated quality of teaching in classrooms. Because of the complex and subtle nature of good teaching, measurement of effectiveness is elusive, and reliable indicators have appeared to be out of reach. The emergence of the National Teacher Certification Board, and its effort to develop assessment procedures, may make it possible to entertain the idea that we can measure quality in teaching.

Some participants expressed a related concern about the teachers who might be leaving the system. Are the evaluation procedures working well enough to identify those teachers who should be encouraged to leave the profession? Conversely, is the system failing to identify and support talented individuals who eventually leave for "greener pastures"?

Recruitment can be no more than a partial solution to the problem of strengthening teaching staff. Many participants felt that massive investment in staff development will be required along with careful, independent evaluation of the effectiveness of such activities. (For a discussion of staff development, see the preceding section, *Teaching and Learning.*)

Working Conditions for Students and Teachers

In discussing working conditions, we return to the idea that the study of school reform should be centered around students' and teachers' experiences.

Clean and safe environment. Participants raised a number of concerns about the conditions that students and teachers face each day. Many mentioned the poor and dilapidated physical condition of schools. Overcrowding in some neighborhoods is notorious;

buildings are dirty; windows broken; bathrooms and lunchrooms are inadequate; and there are shortages of such basic necessities as toilet paper and paper towels. There also was widespread concern about safety and order.

An adequate physical environment is basic to productive work. Given existing conditions, it is difficult to imagine that teachers and students would find many of the schools conducive to learning.

A specific environmental concern arises for closed campus schools. While these schools may foster a sense of safety, do they deny opportunities for student-teacher interactions and extending productive activities into the afternoon?

Only 61 percent of elementary school teachers reported they worked in clean buildings; 24 percent indicated they did not have clean classrooms; and 22 percent said there were broken windows in their classroom. Nearly 30 percent of teachers judged that students do not feel safe, and 23 percent reported they do not feel safe coming and going to school.

—Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn

Materials. Besides a clean and safe physical environment, teachers and students also need basic classroom materials and equipment, but these are not uniformly available. The Consortium's ***Charting Reform*** survey collected some initial information on this issue. Thirty percent of the teachers reported they did not have basic classroom materials. And many teachers used their own money for supplies. Forty-five percent had spent more than $100 in the period from September to May.[21] Furthermore teachers generally do not have the resources and amenities that other professionals take for granted, such as a private place to work, and access to telephones, photocopy machines, and word processors.

Social environment. The social experience is another significant aspect of the work environment for teachers and students. In describing good schools, participants spoke often of the need for a supportive, collegial environment. Research has corroborated the importance of this factor in well-functioning schools. At the most basic level, a supportive social environment assumes that adults and students treat one another with respect and civility. It suggests that teachers have sufficient opportunity to talk and work with one another. It assures that students can feel that teachers accept them as learners and take an interest in their progress. An optimum social environment provides opportunities for students to interact with other adults as well.

A good school has support networks in the school and links to support networks in the community...more parent involvement...provides positive role models...has a secure, safe building that is painted regularly and does not have graffiti....In a good school there should be more responsiveness to students' thoughts and opinions. They feel they are treated as "one bunch" and not as individuals.

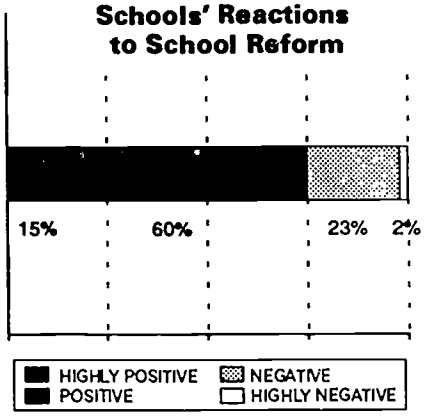
—Student Focus Group

Professional respect. In order to teach effectively and to practice their profession, teachers need a certain amount of influence and control. They should be able to select the texts and materials that are most appropriate for their students, and they should have the ability to influence norms of behavior for students and adults.

Finally, participants stressed that teachers need time for their own learning and time to work with one another on enhancing and improving instruction. The daily responsibilities of teaching, grading papers, supervising lunchrooms, sponsoring extracurricular activities, and so forth crowd out opportunities to think, learn, plan, or create something better.

Participatory Management

The creation of LSCs and the devolution of decision making to individual schools means that schools must be operated through participatory management. This implies a climate of trust, a cooperative ethic, and a strong sense of teamwork. Teachers should be engaged in reform and should exercise influence over improvement efforts. Similar concerns were raised about parents and the community. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some schools demonstrate these characteristics. There the outlook for most schools is promising. There are also stories of some schools, however, where tensions are high. Little can be accomplished in a climate of conflict. A primary objective of the Research Agenda should be to determine the degree to which schools exhibit cooperative work relations between school staff, parents and community members, and analyze the factors that support this spirit.



In the vast majority of schools, teachers are pro-reform, attitudes are positive, conflict is limited, and positive practices are emerging.
—Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn

Structures must be in place to support participatory management. People must have time to meet and conduct their work. "Reform cannot be carried out without talking."[22] School leaders also need information about their school and about effective practices and programs in other schools and other cities. (See the section above on *Governance* for a discussion of information for strategic action.) Resources are needed to permit people to work on improvement projects, to obtain staff development, and to institute improvements.

Participatory management demands that school teams begin to think strategically. The School Improvement Plan provides one vehicle for promoting such thinking as the management team examines the school as a whole and develops a vision about what kind of place it should be. Strategic thinking, however, goes beyond identifying goals. It requires development of plans to meet those goals, analysis of obstacles, allocation of resources, and, finally, measurement of progress and evaluation of results. In short, it requires a continuous flow of quality information.

Schools and their Communities

One critical aspect of schools as organizations that has important implications for their educational effectiveness is their

relationship with the communities that they serve, including parents, local community and social service organizations, and businesses. Chicago schools differ dramatically in the ways in which they relate to their communities; some have numerous ties with the elements of their community, while others operate in virtual isolation.

Research summarized by Henderson (1987)[23] indicates that higher levels of parental involvement in school—including parents maintaining regular contact with their child's school, parents cooperating with teachers to aid their children at home, and parent volunteerism—are associated with higher levels of achievement. Yet a relatively small percentage of parents participate in such activities in the typical school. Research on teachers' efforts to involve parents indicates that only a small percentage of teachers carry out structured activities to encourage parent involvement. These teachers report, however, that low-income parents are just as likely to be responsive as middle-income parents (Epstein and Becker, 1992).[24]

Just as Chicago schools differ significantly in the nature and level of parent involvement, they also differ in the extent to which they have ongoing relationships with community and social service organizations. Yet the benefits of coordinating school services and other social services for students with multiple needs suggests that making full use of such community resources can aid student learning and development.

A key premise of Chicago school reform is that making the school accountable to parents and community through the LSC will open up multiple avenues for other forms of collaboration. Thus, it is important to understand the nature and extent of the relationships between Chicago schools and the parents and communities that they serve, to identify and analyze schools that are exemplary in developing such relationships, and thus to understand the processes by which such collaboration can be fostered in other schools.

Some emerging themes from research on parent involvement

1. Parents and educators are more similar to one another than they often think.

2. Parental involvement is needed through high school.

3. To be effective, programs must include all families, including those who are hard to reach.

4. Working with parents makes teachers' jobs easier.

5. Parent-teacher partnerships take several years to develop.

6. Grants encourage teachers and administrators to take the initiative to create programs involving parents.

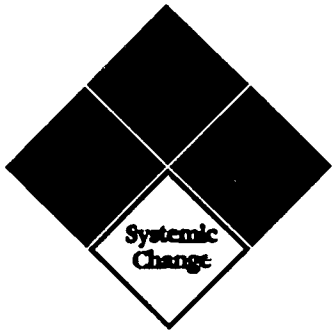
7. Family/school coordinators are important to the success of programs.

8. Programs that have special rooms for parents are effective in making parents feel welcome.

9. Programs need to find ways to reach out to families and encourage their participation without requiring them to come frequently to the school.

10. Technology such as radio, television, videos, and computers, can be helpful in making connections between school and home.

Joyce L. Epstein,
"Paths to Partnership:
What We Can Learn from Federal,
State, District, and School Initiatives,"
Phi Delta Kappan, January 1991.



- Central Support Functions
- Changing Relationships
- Constraints on the System
- Enhancing Analytic Capacity and Evaluation
- Cumulative Effects of Local Actions and Equity

❖ Systemic Change

One of the primary aims of school reform was to shape a smaller, more efficient, and more responsive central administration. More to the point, the central administration was to shift from regulatory and control functions to support functions that would assist local schools in their transition to school-based management. The progress of school reform will depend in large part on how successfully the Central Service Center makes this transition. A key indicator in this regard is whether the general public develops a more positive and trusting attitude toward the central office.

Although public attention has been focused on the role of individual schools in educational change, policy makers cannot lose sight of the ramifications of reform for the entire system. Individual schools may improve, but the aggregate consequences could be minimal. Hence, the final piece of the Research Agenda addresses systemic change.

Central Support Functions

Considerable public attention has focused on the size of the central office. The reform law addressed this concern through an administrative cap. This cap requires that the school system's ratio of administrative expense to instructional expense can be no larger than the average of other districts across the state, and thus it mandated a reduction of central office staff. Key officials in the central office pointed out in interviews, however, that cuts in administrative staff have handicapped the office in its efforts to provide services to schools. They argued that other districts in the state do not face the severe problems and complexities that Chicago confronts and therefore the expectations should not be the same.

More generally, it was believed that a new set of functions is needed at the center to support school change and assist in the development of individual school communities. Although much criticism of the Central Service Center was voiced in the interviews and focus groups, there was clear recognition that there are important central functions that require sustained attention. Some of these are traditional functions—which perhaps were not particularly well done in the past. Other functions are new—resulting directly from a need to support decentralized effort. Demands for basic information, for example, are escalating. Other needs to be met include supporting innovation in the system and intervention in faltering schools.

Key officials in the central office and among other school constituencies were concerned about the adequacy of support services to individual schools. Teachers, parents, and LSC members talked a great deal about the need for consistent and timely information and for more prompt action on budget and supply requests. The Central Service Center clearly is operating under competing demands. On the one hand, decentralization argues for

elimination of staff, and on the other, local control has unleashed requests for all kinds of support. Key areas mentioned by participants included staff development, outreach programs for parents, LSC training, facilities improvement, instructional support, centralized plans for children with special needs, and research. Organizational analyses are needed of the kinds and amounts of service demands, the available structures and resources, and the efficiency of current use. In addition, comparative studies of other urban school districts undergoing decentralization would be beneficial.

...One of the underlying causes of the reform movement was the sense that the non-school administration of Chicago had become too dominant. Following the natural tendency of bureaucracies, it had become overly centralized, too concerned with control, uniformity and compliance rather than with support, assistance and progress. It was the sense of many that the central administration stifled creativity and wasted resources.

— Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning, Chicago Public Schools, Position Paper on Research Agenda: Assessing Reform

Information. While some groups stressed information needs, others—including principals and LSC members—said there was too much information. The consensus, nonetheless, was that useful, high-quality information was greatly needed, and that the standard information packets were too difficult to read. LSC members said that often the central office did not exercise judgment over what kinds of materials should be sent to local schools. And there was agreement that information dissemination should be streamlined. Above all, participants demanded that the system be responsive to their changing needs. Studies of LSCs, principals, and teachers (suggested under *Governance* and *Teaching and Learning*) should clarify local decision making and the kinds of information schools find most helpful.

The best mechanisms for service delivery and information sharing are still open questions. What functions should be centralized, what functions should be left to individual schools, and which are best accomplished through competing resource centers are major issues for ongoing examination.

The adjustment to a decentralized system is a learning process for all involved and requires flexibility and creativity while ongoing responsibilities are still being carried out. The difficulty of the process is compounded by the fact that the Chicago Public Schools are in a sense "writing the book" on restructuring as it develops—there are not too many sources of outside expertise.

—Adrienne Bailey, Deputy Superintendent for Instruction Services

Innovation. In addition to provision of services, participants talked about the need to stimulate innovation and leadership in the system; that is, to develop mechanisms to provide incentives, information, and resources that encourage schools to experiment, replicate worthy programs, and generally find ways to improve instruction. Numerous innovations are already being tried, such as CANAL, Essential Schools, and Accelerated Learning.

Shared experience. One means to promote innovation and problem solving is sharing of information and experiences among schools. While school-based management has the advantage of locating authority with those who are closest to students, it can exacerbate the problem of isolation.

Hence, as the Central Service Center develops mechanisms for supporting innovation, it should address ways to reduce isolation and encourage schools to work with one another.

The District Superintendent should be working for the schools. The DS should be working as a support for principals, getting done for the principal what the principal can't do. If there's an impediment down there, it ought to be the DS that comes down and tries to solve it for the principal....There certainly is a movement to try to get the district offices additional help and try to make them school service centers....District Superintendents should be the top people in the school system, with maybe only a couple people above them....They should be real instructional leaders....

—Margaret Harrigan, Associate Superintendent for Human Resources

Intervention. The School Reform Law created a new function—central intervention in faltering schools. The central system can place schools on probation, specify an improvement plan, and provide technical assistance to help a school resolve its difficulties. If after a year there is not sufficient progress, the Board has the authority to order new LSC elections, remove and replace the principal, replace faculty members, and, if necessary, close the school. We are two years into reform, and intervention procedures have yet to be engaged. Evidence will start to accumulate that some schools are not moving forward.

The process for intervention is new and untested. How well it works may play an important role in shaping long-term outcomes. Procedural issues include how schools are evaluated, what evaluative criteria are used, and what mechanisms are in place to solve problems. Participants suggested that a set of local school indicators be developed to help track schools requiring direct intervention.[25]

We should not underestimate the magnitude of organizational change required at the "center" for school reform to succeed. Chicago must innovate in this regard.

District office. In addition to examination of the changing role of the central office, special attention needs to be given to the role of the district superintendent and the function of the District Service Center. District superintendents control limited resources, but under the reform law they are expected to provide services for fifty schools or more. The appropriate role is still evolving, and the resources needed to support district office responsibilities require continuing attention.

Changing Relationships

Organizational change, whether in local schools or the central administration, requires basic reorientation of individuals' norms and values and a redefinition of their relationships with one another. These relationships and cultural norms are changing within the central administration, between the central office and local schools, and between the central system and outside groups.[26]

Conversations with participants focused primarily on relationships between the central office and local schools. Reorganizing the central office to support school reform has meant a major cultural shift from centralized bureaucratic control of schools to supporting, encouraging, and stimulating the efforts of others at local school sites.

A major issue will be the system's sensitivity in responding to school needs. The culture of the bureaucracy will have to change...it would be useful to collect information from the LSCs and school principals on the support they are getting from the Central Service Center. The Central Service Center should be viewed as a business with schools as its customers, and they need to keep their ear to the ground to see whether they are meeting the needs of the customers.

—Philip Block,
Chairperson,
Chicago School
Finance Authority

In the midst of change, it is not surprising to hear of conflict, uncertainty, misperceptions, and distrust.

Some discussants felt that middle and low-level central office administrators wanted to see school reform fail, and were operating accordingly. One member said that central office staff did not trust local schools—they require schools to fill out an overabundance of paperwork each time the school needs something. Central office correspondence to local schools often has a derogatory tone, telling schools that "this is the way it is." The group felt that in general, central office staff did not respect local schools, school staff, or LSC members.

—District Two,
LSC Member
Focus Group

School personnel in many diverse positions within the system mentioned the lack of understanding between the central office and local schools.

There is an inordinate amount of distrust between the central office and the school...the central office staff needs to understand and support reform. They need training, and it would be good for the central office staff to get out and attend some LSC meetings....The goal should be a partnership between central office and the schools.

—Joseph Monahan,
Deputy Superintendent
for Business and
Human Resources

The group felt strongly that the administrators who make policy decisions in the Central Service Center do not understand the realities that teachers face in the schools....One suggestion was to design a system whereby teachers and CSC administrators would rotate jobs. This discussant thought that this would foster mutual understanding about what bureaucrats and teachers do and the roles they play. This could encourage cooperation and lead to the development of better educational policies.

—Secondary School Teachers Focus Group

...many groups continue to perceive the central office as "bad." because the central office must continue to exist and provide administrative services to local schools, a more cooperative relationship with these groups would be helpful.

—Ted Kimbrough, General Superintendent

Teachers acknowledged the problem and offered suggestions for bringing the reality of the local school situation into the central office.

In addition to the relationship of the central office to local schools, relationships between the administration and outside groups are also changing. Successful school reform demands that the traditional conflict be channeled into more collaborative endeavors. General Superintendent Kimbrough suggested that the outside groups who helped draft the school reform legislation have not made the transition from adversary to supporter.

The business leaders focus group raised concerns about the confusion that exists regarding the meaning of reform. They felt that the dialogue among teachers, parents, school administrators, business representatives, and others must be ongoing if we are to come to some agreement on concrete objectives. Otherwise, they suggest, there will be too many competing agendas in force, and school reform will be hopelessly derailed.

It is not surprising that in a system undergoing tremendous change, relationships initially may be characterized by conflict. However, an effective and high-performing school system requires developing strong and supportive relationships among all participants as it proceeds forward.

Constraints on the System

While the public continues to decry the size and complexity of the central office, comparing it unfavorably to "efficient" business corporations, it is important to understand the constraints within which the administration must operate. The Illinois School Code, other state regulations, federal regulations, court decisions, and collective bargaining agreements all impose limits. Constructive action compels us to identify the features which constrain local action and understand their source. While individual schools need greater freedom to promote improvement efforts, we must also secure the basic concerns which existing regulations and policies were developed to advance. This issue is related to school autonomy. (See *Governance* section of this report for the discussion of concepts of autonomy.) The central questions to be asked of each constraint are, What was it intended to accomplish? How does it now influence the quality of students' educational experience?

Enhancing Analytic Capacity and Evaluation

The Central Service Center is in a position to understand the operation of the system as a whole, and thus has the capacity to inform future plans. Areas frequently mentioned were early childhood education programs, bilingual programs, outreach to parents, teacher recruitment in shortage areas, and student transitions from school to work. The Central Service Center has the larger perspective necessary to project demographic, social, and economic trends and assess their impact on local schools. And participants felt the Central Service Center should also understand the relationship between external programs, such as Head Start, and the local schools.

In a decentralized school system, disseminating quality information on school improvement and student learning activities to local schools becomes a fundamental task. LSC members and other participants mentioned many types of information they would find valuable. This information should be assembled in consistent formats that are useful for individual schools and should be reported regularly to various policy communities and to the broader public. Several key officials noted that while we may disagree on the interpretation of the information placed before us, it is important that quality, objective information be collected and routinely shared among interested audiences. There is strong need for a reliable and valid common core of data.

Many participants mentioned the need for improved systemwide evaluation. A new mechanism for evaluation would provide more fair means of assessing student achievement, school performance, teacher and principal performance, and overall system performance. The system should emphasize the sharing of constructive information with teachers, principals, and other administrators so that they can take positive actions to address problems and needs.

The issue of accountability arose frequently as a topic in interviews and focus groups, but the concept meant different things to different people. Some participants claimed that schools were accountable to the central administration, while others claimed schools were accountable to their local communities. The business focus group felt that LSCs can't be held accountable if they don't have the money, authority, training, and support required to function effectively. Central and district office personnel worried about being responsible when things go wrong in local schools, while no longer having the direct line control they once had.

And who is the Central Service Center accountable to? While the legislation mandates centralized intervention for poor-performing schools, and district superintendents are now accountable to District Councils, some claimed that the central office has escaped bottom-up control and accountability. Many participants felt that local schools should evaluate central office performance.

Cumulative Effects of Local Actions and Equity

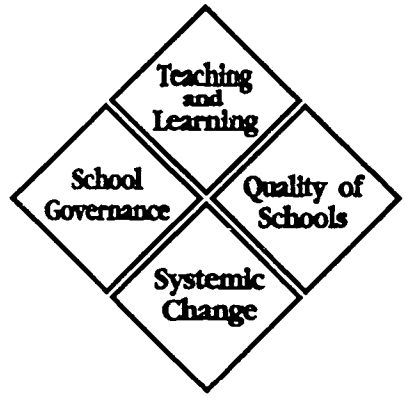
One of the most important questions to ask at the system level is how equitable are the educational opportunities across schools? Secondly, how equitable are educational opportunities within schools? Under decentralization, school reform will affect individual schools in diverse ways. School improvement may be very unevenly distributed across the city with some of the most disadvantaged students and neighborhoods left untouched. Research should uncover how individual school communities respond to school reform, and what factors promote success.

To be sure, equity issues also arise within schools. For example, disenfranchised groups may not have a voice in their Local School Council. Concerns that resources targeted for poor children reach the appropriate students will continue.

Equity concerns focused also on how responsive schools are to diverse cultures of bilingual students and other minorities.[27] There were questions about potential racial and economic segregation in the school system and about whether decentralization acts to promote particularism in the curriculum rather than a common core of experiences for all students. Participants mentioned equity in parent and community involvement, such as fair participation in council decisions and in programs to promote parent involvement. Equity issues were also raised about finances and resources, support services, hiring, and contracts. Some schools have tremendous pressures stemming from overcrowding, while other schools are operating under capacity.

School reform was also intended to promote greater school choice. Whether an enhanced array of meaningful choices emerge within the Chicago Public Schools is an important system-level question. And choice inevitably raises questions in turn about equity. What individuals are most likely to take advantage of expanded choice? Are some groups disadvantaged under such a system? And what about the consequences for local communities? Many spoke about school reform as an exercise in building some responsive local community institutions. How would expanded choice relate to this objective? Clearly, equity issues represent a cross-cutting theme as we probe the concerns identified in the other three areas—school governance, students' and teachers' experiences, and the quality of schools as institutions. Examining these will help to bring equity in focus for the system as a whole.

III. NEXT STEPS IN IMPLEMENTING THE RESEARCH AGENDA



The consultation process surfaced many important concerns. Part II organized these concerns around four major topics: individual school governance, teaching and learning, quality of schools as institutions, and systemic change. Advancing research and reporting on these concerns implies a broad agenda as each area includes several critical aspects targeted for improvement. The remainder of this report outlines next steps in pressing this agenda forward. There are important implications for the kind of work to be undertaken and how the Consortium should organize itself to promote it.

An Organization for the Consortium to Support Collaborative Research

From its initial conception the Consortium was envisioned as a small organization designed to facilitate and encourage efforts among area researchers that might promote school improvement, ensure that important research questions are addressed, and that results are broadly disseminated and discussed. It is intended to enhance the analytic capacities of already existing institutions and to stimulate cooperative efforts among them.

The Consortium, working as a cooperative of area researchers, proposes to address directly some of the activities implied by this agenda. Included here are support for the development of an indicator system, a regular Conditions of Education reporting series, and related support activities such as data archiving and public use surveys. In defining this scope of core work, the Consortium has focused on addressing concerns for which it's particularly well-suited. In addition to their substantive importance, each core activity meets three critical tests. They require:

- a pluralistic approach involving broad input from a variety of groups;
- access to a diverse array of technical and substantive expertise; and
- a work context committed to balanced, objective deliberations.

Beyond its core work, the Consortium also seeks to facilitate the work of individual area researchers and encourage informal collaborations among researchers. Within this realm are a wide range of in-depth specialized studies and action research projects called for in the agenda. In engaging the participation of Chicago researchers, the Consortium will guard against potential duplication of effort or repeated requests to the same schools for similar information. Thus, the Consortium will act as a clearinghouse for research projects. Uniting all efforts is a commitment to fairness in access to the research process, an emphasis on promoting sustained public conversations about schooling, and advocacy for the collection and reporting of quality data that can help to inform such conversations.

In addition, the Consortium will provide the convening context for two functions which were identified as critical needs by the participants in interviews and focus groups. First, it can bring organizations together who are interested in responding to schools' needs for existing research on particular problems or issues. Dissemination is the institutional mission for several Consortium members, including NCREL, ISBE, the CTU, and others, and the Consortium can serve as a focal point for collaboration among these agencies. Secondly, the Consortium can help to facilitate the work of researchers who are engaged in organizational development and action research projects with particular schools. While it is unrealistic for the Consortium to undertake communication with hundreds of schools, it can assist organizations and individuals who have such ties to the schools.

The actual organization of the Consortium has been gradually evolving in response to the work it has chosen to undertake. Advancing research and reporting on the issues outlined in Part II makes substantial new demands. The basic commitment to enhancing analytic capacities across the city through cooperative work, however, remains a cornerstone. In this spirit, the Consortium proposes to create four substantive panels. Each panel will concentrate on a particular research area, bringing together specialists with substantive expertise and research skills, knowledge of Chicago schools, and ties to stakeholder groups. Each panel will:

- Continue the stakeholder consultation process for each survey or study in its area.
- Maintain ties to research networks around the country and synthesize ongoing research relevant to Chicago school reform and school improvement.
- Further refine the key concerns within each substantive area, develop a set of relevant indicators, and monitor the adequacy of available data for those indicators.

- Assist in the preparation of the semiannual reports on the Conditions of Education in Chicago.

- Encourage colleagues and others to carry out their research on topics within the Research Agenda.

A fifth, cross-cutting panel, will also be established to coordinate efforts among the four topical panels and to guide the support activities of the Consortium including a public data archive and general use surveys. This group would also take responsibility for the Integrative Reports described below. These five panels are the heart of the Consortium, playing a key role in the core work undertaken directly by the Consortium and facilitating the individual efforts of other researchers. Their work will be supported by a small research and administrative staff within the Consortium.

The Work That Needs to Be Done

In moving from the conceptual framework to more specific research plans, a diverse array of activities must be tailored to address the varied concerns raised. This work will encompass two broad areas:

(1) developing a set of indicators for periodic reporting on the progress of school reform; and

(2) conducting in-depth studies of the issues identified through the consultation process.

The indicators and special studies complement one another. Together they capture both the conditions of education in the city and illumine the forces at work that lie behind these conditions.

Indicators for School Reform and School Improvement in Chicago

Indicators are quantitative measures that are collected periodically and used to gauge the overall health of the system and determine the extent to which progress toward established goals is occurring. In the course of the consultation process, a number of ideas emerged about possible indicators relevant to the implementation of Chicago School Reform. Figures 2 through 5 present these suggestions organized around the key concerns in the four major topical areas: *School Governance*, *Teaching and Learning*, *Quality of Schools as Organizations*, and *Systemic Change*. Some of these indicators currently exist; others exist but may need to be collected with greater care and precision; yet others will need to be developed. These displays represent a starting point for the work of each of the four Consortium panels. Based on

further stakeholder consultation and research, we envision that these will evolve over time into a sophisticated measurement, data collection and reporting system.

In using existing and new indicators from any source, the Consortium will review and analyze all steps in the design of the indicator, the gathering and analysis of relevant data, and the staffing of these activities, in order to insure that they conform with accepted standards of reliability and validity for the purposes of measuring individual school and systemwide progress. The Consortium will make recommendations on ways to improve indicators to relevant agencies and the public.

Figure 2

Some Indicator Clusters on School Governance*

Evolving Roles and Expectations

- LSC members' perceptions of their role with respect to principal evaluation, budget formulation, and School Improvement Plan
- LSC members' perceptions of services from District Service Center and Central Service Center

Effective Functioning of the LSC

- Number of people voting in LSC elections
- Number of candidates running for LSCs
- Proportion of LSC members who change from one election to another
- Attrition of LSC members
- Frequency of LSC meetings
- Participation of LSC members in discussions
- Proportion of meetings where a quorum is not achieved
- Average size of audience at LSC meetings
- Participation of community members in LSC committees
- Perceptions of LSC functioning of cultural constituents: parents, teachers, and community members

Changing Role of the Principal

- Principals' tenure
- Perceptions of working conditions and sense of satisfaction
- Plans to remain at the school
- Principals' perceptions of their role with respect to the LSC, budget formulation, and School Improvement Plan
- Principals' time allocation

Autonomy of Local Schools

- LSCs' ratings of services from District Service Center and Central Service Center
- Principals' ratings of services from District Service Center and Central Service Center
- Perceptions regarding school autonomy

Involvement of Parents and Community Residents

- Staff reports and ratings of parent and community involvement
- Parent participation in meetings, attendance at school programs, volunteer activities
- Staff reports on nature and extent of working relationships with community organizations

*We term these indicator clusters because each is likely to consist of several pieces of statistical information which may be combined to form a composite statistic or cluster of related data on a particular topic.

Figure 3

Some Indicator Clusters on Teaching and Learning

Analysis of Student Performance

- Student attendance
- Promotion from one grade to the next
- Achievement tests, including new forms of assessment
- Drop out rates
- Graduation rates
- Absences and tardy rates
- Number of years required to complete high school
- Participation in postsecondary education

Analysis of Students' Educational Experiences

- Range of academic and vocational courses, by subject matter and grade, to which students are exposed
- Comparison of course taking patterns with standards recommended by recognized national organizations, such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
- Teachers' reports of students' opportunities to learn challenging subject matter, by race, ethnicity, family income, and school types

Analysis of Students' Attitudes and Aspirations

- Students' perception of the school climate, including whether teachers seem interested in them, how safe they feel, and whether rules are fair and enforced
- Students' reports of engagement with learning, such as interest in subjects, being challenged, feeling absorbed, reading outside school
- Students' aspirations for further education, work and family life

Responding to Student Diversity

- Percentage of students who are exposed through classroom experiences, extra curricular activities, and all school programs to multicultural education
- Amount and types of staff development teachers receive for bilingual and multicultural education

Teachers and Instructional Reform

- Reports and ratings of PPAC influence on school policy and curriculum
- Teachers' reports of faculty influence in curricular decisions
- Percent of courses taught by teachers with appropriate subject matter preparation

School Readiness and Early Childhood Education

- Proportion of children receiving early childhood education
- Demographic statistics on families with young children, including unemployment, poverty, language use
- Health status of children at school entry, including history of low birth weight, use of drugs by mother, number of visits per year to a health care provider, illnesses in the last year

Figure 3 continued

Schooling and the Work Place

- Percentage of graduates employed, types of jobs they have, employment duration, and amount of pay
- Ratings by employers of workers who have graduated from Chicago schools

Figure 4

Some Indicator Clusters on Quality of Schools as Organizations

Schools as Places of Purpose and Character

- Academic standards, academic press, expectations for teachers and students
- Sense of efficacy, commitment among teachers and principals
- Students' feelings of affiliation with the school

Quality of the Teaching Force

- Academic background statistics on teachers entering the system
- Academic background statistics on teachers leaving the system
- Teachers' reports of goals and expectations for students, by subject matter and grade
- Observation of instruction with respect to organization of instruction, clarity of expectations, maximizing instructional time, and balancing lecture, independent seat work, and student participation

Working Conditions for Teachers and Students

- Ratings of the physical conditions of the school: whether it is clean, in good repair, regularly painted, windows not broken, bathrooms and lunchrooms in good condition, and whether there is adequate lighting and space for classrooms
- Adequate supply of basic materials—paper, pencils, crayons, paints, scissors, etc.
- Adequate curriculum materials, textbooks, library books, audio-visual equipment, science equipment, vocational education equipment, etc.
- Sense of safety, security among students and school staff
- Ratings of principal's leadership
- Teachers' attitudes regarding students' habits, efforts, and abilities and their own feelings of efficacy and satisfaction

Participatory Management

- Collegiality among school staff
- Climate of trust and cooperation vs. suspicion and conflict
- Outreach activities on the part of schools to involve parents
- Parent participation in meetings, attendance at school programs, volunteer activities

Figure 5

Some Indicator Clusters on Systemic Change

Central Support Function

- Measurements of client satisfaction with services provided by District and Central Service Centers (mentioned under School Governance)

Changing Relationships

- Perceptions that District and Central Service Centers provide support versus operate as regulatory agencies
- Reports and ratings by District and Central Service Center staff, principals, LSC members, and teachers of working relationships between central and district offices and local schools

Constraints on the System

- Perceptions of Central Service Center staff, principals, and LSC members of the limitations on their authority

Enhancing Analytic Capacity and Evaluation

- Reports and ratings by Central Service Center staff, Board of Education members, District Service Center staff, principals, and LSC members of the usefulness of evaluation and research information they receive

Cumulative Effects of Local Actions and Equity

- Comparison of LSC and principal indicators across the system to assess the progress of school governance for the district as a whole and to investigate possible inequities
- Comparison of learning opportunities for students, student achievement, and student attitudes across the system to assess progress for the system as a whole and identify inequities in access to resources and learning opportunities
- Comparison of qualities of school organizations across the system to assess overall quality in different communities and identify inequities in access

Special Studies

Special studies delve more deeply into issues and problems and should provide insights into the phenomena behind the indicators. Action research is also suggested, where practitioners and researchers work together to investigate specific questions and problems. The resources of the Consortium are available to facilitate in-depth studies, encourage action research and dissemination, and convene meetings related to these activities. Member organizations and individual researchers are expected to take the lead in initiating research specific to their interests. Several important studies are suggested below. These are but a few of the many research activities that should be pursued in the next few years.

School Governance

Case studies of effective LSCs. The purpose of this study would be to identify the conditions, structures, and processes that characterize effective LSCs and share these understandings broadly with other LSCs. Schools that have particularly effective LSCs would be identified through nominations from central and district office staff, teachers and principals, community organizations, and others. Intensive interviews and observations would be carried out over a six-month period.

Questions might be focused around the following themes: (1) background of LSC members; (2) the nomination and election process; (3) organization and functioning of the LSC, including committee structure, when meetings are held, what gets on the agenda, how cooperation is fostered, and how conflict is handled. In addition, attention would be given to (4) how the LSC discharges its responsibilities with respect to the School Improvement Plan, the budget, principal evaluation, allocation of staff, and advice on curriculum. Other themes would be: (5) role boundaries between the LSC and the principal and working relationships with the staff; and (6) the relationships with parents, community members, and community agencies. How is information communicated, and how does the LSC obtain community input? An overarching concern is how LSCs create conditions that encourage instructional improvement.

The principal as change agent. Under the new school reform law, the principal's role has experienced the greatest transformation. At the same time, there is widespread agreement that principals are highly influential and their actions will have a significant effect on the progress of school reform. The purpose of this study would be to study cases where principals have succeeded in leading their schools to adopt genuine improvements. Schools would be nominated through a process similar to the one described above. The content of the study would be the strategic choices made by principals, as they attack problems, focusing on those

strategies shown to be particularly effective in improving student achievement.

Intensive interviews, perhaps supplemented by surveys, would be used to examine several dimensions of the principals' role: (1) who is attracted to the principalship; (2) who stays and who leaves; (3) how does the principal define his or her role; (4) what is the nature of the relationship to individuals in other roles and the constituencies that stand behind them; (5) what are the incentives and impediments in introducing change? The study would also investigate contextual factors such as the size of the school, resources, composition of the student body, and composition of the teaching staff.

❖ Teaching and Learning

Learning readiness of students entering first grade. Using extant data and more in-depth methods, this study would investigate the range of children's pre-school and kindergarten experiences and the impact of these experiences on learning readiness. These experiences include care by the family, various day care arrangements, and different kinds of preschool. Programs might be compared in terms of cognitive and social learning, teaching methods, and the concepts about children and child learning that guide them. A key concern would be the subsequent differential adaptation of children at the first-grade level and beyond. Particular attention should be paid to the experiences of children from non-English-speaking homes and the sequence of language use as they move from the home to the preschool, the kindergarten, and first grade.

Studies of the first-grade reading curriculum and the eighth-grade mathematics curriculum. Learning studies must probe deeply, combining concerns about teaching particular subject matters at different grade levels. Two key concerns are first-grade reading and eighth-grade mathematics. Both are critical points in students' careers because they have a major impact on students' readiness for, and success in, subsequent content areas. The purpose of these studies would be to determine the quality of students' learning experiences in reading and mathematics at these junctures. To study curriculum, the researcher must pinpoint specific content in a particular grade. Data on curricular offerings would be gathered through classroom observation and surveys. These data would then be linked to the ITBS scores, and for the eighth grade, to IGAP performance, with the proper controls for students' knowledge before entering either grade. Researchers might investigate the quality of the instruction and materials, outreach to parents, and the distribution of lower level tasks and higher order thinking skills. How these vary across types of schools and students would also be examined. Attention would be paid to the congruence and variance between the enacted curriculum and the state and district goals.

Exploring alternate methods of assessment. Assessment is a large, complicated, and highly charged topic. It demands a range of skills including psychometric expertise, substantive and pedagogical knowledge, familiarity with data collection in schools, and knowledge of sophisticated dissemination and communication strategies. The purpose of this study would be to explore methods of assessment that fulfill the following objectives:

- Assess student learning relative to clearly specified district and state goals on the full range of skills and understandings that students are expected to demonstrate, including performance of tasks, higher order thinking skills, artistic learning, and the like.

- Create incentives for teachers to adopt educationally sound practices rather than limit their instruction to skills on standardized tests.[28]

- Achieve a balance between measuring progress toward learning objectives and comparing students with one another.

- Produce information that can be easily understood and used by teachers and principals as well as the broader public.

The Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning has already begun work on this issue. It would be important to build on the work that has already been done.

Another avenue to be explored is classroom-based assessment. Teachers can conduct assessments of a broader set of skills than is usually found in standardized tests. As well as being useful for diagnostic purposes, such assessments may also have implications for reporting beyond the classroom.

Costs of alternative methods must be determined and weighed against possible benefits. Exploring alternative assessments is a large-scale effort, and additional funds would be needed to support it.

Study of the school-to-work transition. This study would take the form of action research. The purpose of the study would be to identify both universal and specialized skills, knowledge and dispositions that students need in the work force. The goal would be to modify schooling experiences to assure that students have opportunities to attain the competencies that employers are seeking.

The study might require convening groups of teachers, vocational education specialists, union representatives, and local employers. A literature review should be undertaken to capitalize on what is already known. For example, a recent Department of Labor study outlines the attributes that employers say they desire. Surveys of employers in various industries, supplemented by a

smaller number of in-depth case studies of specific employers, might be carried out.

Beyond building a knowledge base for curriculum change, this study might focus also on strategies for maintaining closer communication and linkage between the school system and industry. For instance, as a means of altering the incentive structure for students, employers might be advised to request transcripts, teacher recommendations, and records of extracurricular activities. Conversely, advertisement and placement activities might be brought into the school. Students could receive instruction on searching for work, writing resumes, and interviewing.

Teacher renewal. There is widespread agreement that professional development is essential if instruction and student learning are to be improved. According to the ***Charting Reform*** survey, the vast majority of teachers already participate in some form of professional development. Consequently, it would be worthwhile to investigate this issue to learn more about whether and how current professional development activities contribute to local school reform. Pertinent questions include the following: What kinds of professional development do teachers pursue? How much time do they spend on professional development? What is the relationship of these activities to the school's SIP? Does professional development enhance collegiality and teamwork, or is it primarily an individual activity? What types of professional development appear to be the most effective? What pattern of professional development is most likely to strengthen the urban school teaching force?

❖ Quality of Schools as Organizations

Recruitment of teachers. A study of teacher recruitment seems likely to lead to identification of important policy and program options. The purpose of this study would be to determine the characteristics of teachers who are newly hired, the curriculum areas experiencing shortages, and mechanisms that could be used to attract qualified teachers with the range of skills needed in Chicago schools. A study of the teachers who have joined the school system in the last three years would be undertaken, and a combination of extant information as well as interviews with a sample of teachers and principals would be used.

The relevant questions would include: What institutions do they come from? What is the nature of their preparation? How do they experience entry into the system? It would be useful to convene representatives of area colleges and universities engaged in teacher training, the Department of Human Resources for the school system, the Chicago Teachers' Union, and North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) (which is currently examining teacher recruitment in the Midwest) to advise the study.

This same group could then help share information on results and work together to implement recommendations.

Teachers and school reform. Like principals, teachers are pivotal to the implementation of reform. Whether the change in governance leads to improvement in instruction and learning depends very much on teacher participation in reform. The purpose of this study would be to examine the degree to which teachers have embraced reform, the conditions under which they are most likely to become or remain engaged in reform, and the impediments that stand in their way.

A more long-term question is how teacher commitment to reform affects student learning. The Consortium's recent survey of elementary teachers, *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn*, is beginning to answer some of these questions. The next step is to link student achievement data to the teacher data in order to better understand the relationship between teachers' attitudes and experiences, school quality factors, and student performance. In-depth investigations of schools where teachers have been able to plan and implement staff development, modernize their curriculum, and change their own classroom teaching will be very valuable. Much could be learned through structured interviews with principals, teachers, and students in a sample of schools where innovation is occurring.

School-community connections. A study of how schools are working with parents and agencies within their communities to better meet the needs of students is essential to the Research Agenda. Case studies would be undertaken of schools that are having some success in this area. The focus of the study would be to determine the range of mechanisms schools adopt to engage both parents and community agencies. What are the conceptual underpinnings of such mechanisms? Do they in fact contribute to the social resources available to students to support learning? How do parents and outside agencies contribute to positive school change? In addition, surveys could be undertaken to determine broader views and reactions of parents toward the school.

❖ Systemic Change

Organizational change at the center. A study of change at the center would examine the central office in terms both of its culture and its structure. The research would comprise, first, an ethnographic study of change in the Central Service Center. This part of the study would focus on historical documentation of changes in personnel, changes in organizational culture, changes in power and influence, changes in communication patterns, and changes in the ways staff begin to alter their ideas and duties to provide support to schools rather than regulate them. Of particular importance is documenting changes in communication patterns between the central office and schools regarding day-to-day administrative procedures. This was a frequently cited concern in

interview and focus groups. A second part of the study would examine the tension between the philosophy of decentralization and the accrued responsibilities that promote continued centralization and standardization.

Comparative study of school innovations. A study of school innovations could be an action-oriented research project. The purpose would be to synthesize information on the nature and progress of interventions aimed at restructuring schools and to share this information broadly within the system. The interventions include programs such as CANAL, Accelerated Learning, Comer's schools, the Kellogg project, as well as university-school partnerships, school-business partnerships, and others.

The focus of the study would be to identify common experiences and lessons to be learned about how to work with schools, how to develop meaningful change, and how to sustain enthusiasm and commitment. A network of school-based and other researchers, curriculum specialists, teachers, and foundation representatives could be effective in undertaking the research activities and developing ways to share it broadly. The Illinois State Board of Education and NCREL would be important resources because both have capabilities in studying innovations and in dissemination.

Reporting Results and Advancing an Informed Dialogue

Throughout this report, we have emphasized the research that is needed—a conceptual framework for it, some specific work to be undertaken, and an organization for the Consortium to advance these efforts. One piece remains to be considered—how to promote access and discussion of such information. As noted earlier, the Consortium seeks to share information broadly, to promote dialogue on school reform and improvement, and to inform these conversations with the best information attainable. To address these aims two kinds of reports are planned: (1) A periodic Conditions of Education in Chicago series, and (2) Integrative reports on the development of school reform.

Conditions of Education in Chicago Series

These reports would be published twice a year and would cycle through the four conceptual areas, so that each area is covered once over a two-year period. The reports would integrate extant information from a variety of sources with new data collected by the Consortium. They would share information on the condition of a certain aspect of education but also offer analytical commentary to help readers understand underlying forces.

An individual Consortium report on the conditions of education can be thought of as an information pyramid. A limited number of key indicators of status appear at the top of each

pyramid. Consider, for example, the concern about children's readiness for school which would be addressed in the semiannual report on Teaching and Learning. The key indicators of status at the top of that pyramid might be indexes of cognitive, social, health, and nutritional status at school entry. These data provide a picture of how "ready" the population of children are as they enter school. Such statistics might be culled from annual school system and State Board of Education reports, if these data meet appropriate standards of reliability and validity, and complemented with new data collected by the Consortium.

The next two levels of the pyramid elaborate these summary indicators further. At level two, an expanded set of statistics provides more detail about the forces behind the summary statistics. On the topic of child readiness, for example, statistics might be presented on children with low birth weights, the incidence of children born with drug dependency, children living in poverty conditions, children's language and cultural backgrounds, and the availability of pre-school and health care services. Published reports from organizations such as Chapin Hall, the Urban League, the Metropolitan Chicago Information Center might anchor this section of the report.

Level three reports results of more in-depth investigations, such as case studies, program evaluations, and smaller-scale quantitative studies. These studies may be weaker in terms of scientific generalization than those at level two; however, they would provide insights into the factors and circumstances that might explain a set of conditions.[29] With respect to school readiness, a special study might investigate children's pre-school and kindergarten experiences and the impact of these experiences on subsequent school adjustment and achievement. Such a study would explore not only the effect of family background but also the educational experiences that make a difference in children's readiness for first grade. More generally, this reporting level would draw on individual studies from both local and national researchers.

Integrative Reports on the Development of School Reform

Second, the Consortium periodically will publish reports that cut across the four conceptual areas. These occasional reports will link data from the four conceptual areas to a developmental model of school improvement. The model will suggest a set of realistic expectations regarding what kinds of school changes can be expected at what points in time. For example, the survey *Charting Reform* indicated that the new governance structure is settling into place in most schools, but that changes in instruction are not yet widespread. Clearly, these findings indicate that a key goal of school reform still needs to be addressed. On balance, the architects of school reform argued from the beginning that governance change was needed to stimulate organizational change at the building-level which in turn was a prerequisite for instructional

improvement. From this perspective, reform is developing as expected.

Dissemination and Discourse

Communicating and sharing research results is not a passive activity, nor is it one that occurs in a vacuum. The Consortium intends to follow the guidelines contained in the background paper prepared by NCREL for the Consortium:

- For each report, careful consideration will be given to who the potential users are.
- Research-based information will be presented with liberal use of graphics and creative page formats.
- Research findings will not be limited to written reports. Press releases, face-to-face meetings, workshops, conferences, and telecommunications will all be used.
- Consideration will be given to preparing users for reports, through means such as meetings and workshops with LSC members, principals, and teachers to discuss how to use individual school reports.
- Dissemination of research findings will be coordinated so that information is shared with a variety of audiences using a mixed set of strategies.

Researchers are routinely judged by the number of publications in scholarly journals and how often their work is cited by others. The research agenda described here will surely result in individual contributions deemed meritorious by this criterion. Ultimately, however, the Consortium itself must be accountable to a different standard. Does its work contribute to a more informed public discourse about education in the city—an ongoing discourse from the city center in the Loop, to Pershing Road, to the 540 individual school communities each of which is striving to become a vital self-guided institution of their neighborhoods? From this perspective, every research activity of the Consortium is an opportunity to stimulate such conversations. Each report provides a context for bringing people together and moving the conversation a little further.

Concluding Comment

Hundreds of individuals across the city have contributed to this Research Agenda. The Consortium has completed its first study: *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn.* The foundation has been laid for the productive research and reporting activities foreseen by the Research Agenda. Implementation will provide the means to continuously and objectively examine the progress of school reform and school improvement in Chicago. Research reports will furnish a mechanism for sustaining public attention and concern with the city's schools and their needs.

We are poised for a different course. Let us hope that we do not engage in what Larry Cuban calls "Reforming Again, Again, and Again".[30] We have before us an opportunity to become a self-guiding community of educators and concerned citizens, and we should seize that opportunity.

ENDNOTES

1. See, for example, L. Cuban, "Reforming Again, Again and Again," *Educational Researcher*, 19 (1), 3-13; also Mirel on decentralization.

2. The boxes provide running commentary that complements and enhances the expository text.

3. K. D. Peterson, "Perspective on School Leadership," Remarks prepared for the Conference of the Consortium on Chicago School Research, March 8, 1991 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1991).

4. K. S. Louis, "Perspective on School Change and Development," Remarks prepared for the Conference of the Consortium on Chicago School Research, March 8, 1991 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1991).

5. K. D. Peterson "Perspective on School Leadership."

6. *Ibid.*

7. See A. S. Bryk and K. L. Hermanson "Educational Indicator Systems: Observations on their Structure, Interpretation and Use," Paper adapted from a report to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991).

8. J. A. Easton, A. S. Bryk, M. E. Driscoll, J. G. Kotsakis, P. A. Sebring, and A. J. van der Ploeg *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn* (Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research, 1991).

9. J. J. Attinasi, "Perspective on Latino Students, Families and Communities," Remarks prepared for the Conference of the Consortium on Chicago School Research, March 8, 1991 (Gary: Indiana University Northwest, 1991).

10. J. Hixson and M. Kroeger, eds., *Starting with Students: Gauging the Success of Chicago School Reform*, Proceedings of the Conference on Chicago School Reform (Chicago: MacArthur Foundation, 1989).

11. S. K. Clements, and A. C. Forsaith, *Chicago School Reform: National Perspectives and Local Responses*, Proceedings of a conference sponsored by the Educational Excellence

Network and the Joyce Foundation (Washington, D.C.: Educational Excellence Network, 1990).

12. D. R. Moore, "A Student-Centered Model for Analyzing Chicago School Reform," Paper prepared for the Conference of the Consortium on Chicago School Research, March 8, 1991 (Chicago: Designs for Change, 1991).

13. H. J. Walberg, "Effective Educational Practices: A Synthesis and Research Agenda for Chicago," Paper prepared for the Conference of the Consortium on Chicago School Research, March 8, 1991 (Chicago: University of Illinois at Chicago, 1991).

14. F. Newmann, "Student Engagement and High School Reform," *Educational Leadership, 46, 5,* (February 1989).

15. R. A. Mickelson and S. S. Smith, "Inner-City Social Dislocations and School Outcomes: A Structural Interpretation," in G. L. Berry and J. K. Asumen, eds. *Black Students: Psychosocial Issues and Academic Achievement*, (Newberry Park, California: Sage Publications, 1989).

16. J. J. Attinasi, "Perspective on Latino Students, Families and Communities."

17. K. D. Peterson, "Perspective on School Leadership."

18. J. Q. Easton, A. S. Bryk, M. E. Driscoll, J. G. Kotsakis, P. A. Sebring, A. J. van der Ploeg, *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn.*

19. Margaret Harrigan, Associate Superintendent for Human Resources, Chicago Public Schools, Interview, January 3, 1991.

20. G. A. Hess, *School Restructuring: Chicago Style* (Newberry Park, California: Corwin Press, 1991).

21. J. Q. Easton, A. S. Bryk, M. E. Driscoll, J. G. Kotsakis, P. A. Sebring, A. J. van der Ploeg, *Charting Reform: The Teachers' Turn.*

22. K. S. Louis, "Perspective on School Change and Development," Remarks prepared for the Conference of the Consortium on Chicago School Research, March 8, 1991 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1991).

23. A.T. Henderson, *The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement* (Columbia, Maryland: National Committee for Citizens in Education).

24. J. L. Epstein and H. J. Becker, "Parent Involvement: A Survey of Teacher Practices," *Elementary School Journal* 83(2): 85-102.

25. J. Kotsakis, "Looking Ahead: From School Reform to School Restructuring," A paper prepared for the Consortium on Chicago School Research (Chicago: 1991).

26. Robert Sampieri, Chief Operating Officer for the Chicago Public Schools, discussed the need for improved communication channels between the central office and the state legislature, between school sites and his offices, and within the central office.

27. These comments were made in speeches given by John Attinasi and Edgar Epps at the Conference of the Consortium for Chicago School Research, March 8, 1991, Chicago, Illinois.

28. Lloyd Bond, "Testing and Chicago School Reform," *Chicago School Reform: National Perspectives and Local Responses* (Washington, D.C.: Educational Excellence Network, 1990).

29. A. S. Bryk and K. L. Hermanson, "Educational Indicator Systems: Observations on their Structure, Interpretation and Use."

30. L. Cuban, "Reforming Again, Again, and Again."

❖ APPENDIX

Developing the Research Agenda

The Consortium, formed in the summer of 1990, involves faculty from local universities, members of research advocacy groups, foundation representatives, staff from the Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning of the Chicago Public Schools, and representatives from the Illinois State Board of Education, and the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

The Consortium is an independent group which seeks to promote a range of research activities that can advance school improvement in the city and assess the progress of school reform. It aims to (1) encourage broad access to the research agenda setting process; (2) promote wide dissemination and discussion of research findings; and (3) assure high standards of quality in research design, data collection, and analysis.

The Research Agenda grew out of four activities: interviews with key officials, focus groups with school constituencies, position statements solicited from various groups regarding the issues which should be addressed in a comprehensive program of research on school reform and school improvement. In March 1990, the Consortium held a citywide conference to review the results of the consultation process and identify broad conceptual themes of the Research Agenda.

The Joyce Foundation, the Illinois State Board of Education, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Chicago Public Schools provided funding for the development of the Research Agenda.

Interviews

Adrienne Bailey
Deputy Superintendent, Instructional Services,
Chicago Public Schools

Sue Bentz
Assistant Superintendent for Teacher Education and Certification,
Illinois State Board of Education

Bruce Berndt
President,
Chicago Principal's Association

Philip Block
Chairperson,
Chicago Public Schools Finance Authority

Mary Jane Broncato
Associate Superintendent for Programs and Accountability,
Illinois State Board of Education

Sen. Miguel del Valle
State Senator, 5th District

Tee Gallay
Education Specialist, Committee on Education,
City Council

Margaret Harrigan
Associate Superintendent, Human Resources,
Chicago Public Schools

Thomas Hehir
Associate Superintendent, Special Education,
Chicago Public Schools

Tom Kerins
Manager for the Illinois Goals Assessment Program,
Illinois State Board of Education

Ted Kimbrough
General Superintendent,
Chicago Public Schools

Robert Leininger
State Superintendent of Education

Dorothy Magett
Associate Superintendent for Program Development and Intervention,
Illinois State Board of Education

Ava C. McKinney
Field Representative,
Chicago Teachers Union

Dick Miguel
Assistant Superintendent for Adult, Vocational and Technical Education,
Illinois State Board of Education

Joseph Monahan
Deputy Superintendent for Business and Human Resources,
Chicago Public Schools

Lourdes Monteagudo
Deputy Mayor for Education

John Perkins
Manager for Evaluation,
Illinois State Board of Education

Al Ramirez
Executive Deputy Superintendent,
Illinois State Board of Education

Karol Richardson
Associate Superintendent for Finance and Support Services,
Illinois State Board of Education

Robert Saddler
Deputy Superintendent of School Operations,
Chicago Public Schools

Robert Sampieri
Chief Operating Officer,
Chicago Public Schools

Joan Jeter Slay
Chairperson, Reform Committee,
Interim School Board

Richard Stephenson
Superintendent of District Service Center,
Chicago Public Schools

Connie Wise
Assistant Superintendent for Planning, Research and Evaluation,
Illinois State Board of Education

Theodore H. Wright
Coordinator of the Office of Reform Implementation,
Chicago Public Schools

Focus Groups

Elementary and High School Teachers

Secondary School Teachers

Local School Council Members, District #2

Local School Council Members, District #5

Local School Council Members, District #9

Parents

Latino Parents

Principals

High School Students

Sub-District Superintendents

Business Leaders

Position Statements

Position statements were solicited from over fifty organizations, and the following groups responded:

Department of Research, Evaluation and Planning Chicago Public Schools

Chicago Neighborhood Organizing Project

First National Bank of Chicago

Greater Albany Park Parents

Chicago Teachers Union

Monitoring Commission for Desegregation Implementation

Designs for Change

Leadership for Quality Education

Background Papers Prepared for the Conference

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, *Dissemination of Research-Based Information: A Critical Component of Chicago School Reform*

Herbert J. Walberg, *Effective Educational Practices: A Synthesis and Research Agenda for Chicago*

Illinois State Board of Education, *Chicago Reform: State Agency Perspective/Evaluation Questions*

John J. Attinasi, *Hispanic Educational Research in View of Chicago Education Reform*

Anthony S. Bryk and Kim L. Hermanson, *Educational Indicator Systems: Observations on their Structure, Interpretation and Use*

Speakers at the Conference

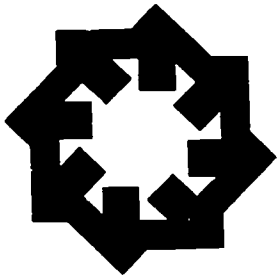
John J. Attinasi, Director of the Urban Teacher Education Program, Indiana University, N.W.: "Perspective on Hispanic Students, Families and Communities."

Edgar Epps, Professor of Education, University of Chicago: "Perspective on African-American Students, Families and Communities."

Ann Lieberman, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, Teachers College, Columbia University: "Perspective on Teacher Professionalism."

Kent Peterson, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Administration, University of Wisconsin—Madison: "Perspective on School Leadership."

Karen Seashore Louis, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Policy and Administration, University of Minnesota: "Perspective on School Development and Change."



The Consortium on Chicago School Research

Background/Acknowledgements

The Consortium on Chicago School Research is an independent federation of Chicago area organizations which have come together to undertake a range of research activities designed to assist school improvement in the city and assess its progress. It aims to encourage: (1) broad access to the research agenda setting process; (2) the collection and regular reporting of systematic information on the condition of education in the city; (3) high standards of quality in research design, data collection and analysis; and (4) wide dissemination and discussion of research findings.

The Consortium is deliberately multi-partisan. Its membership includes faculty from area universities, research staff from the Chicago Public Schools, representatives of the Illinois State Board of Education and the North Central Regional Laboratory, researchers in advocacy groups, as well as other interested individuals and organizations. The Consortium views research not just as a technical operation of gathering data and publishing reports, but as a process of community education advanced through sustained public discourse.

Achieving School Reform in Chicago: What We Need to Know grew out of the collaboration of members of the Research Agenda Work Group whose names are listed inside the front cover. In addition, Ann Paden, Shaunti Knauth, Tom Howard, and Kim Hermanson provided extensive editorial and technical support in producing this report. Financial support for the development of the Research Agenda was provided by the Joyce Foundation, the Illinois State Board of Education, and by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

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